



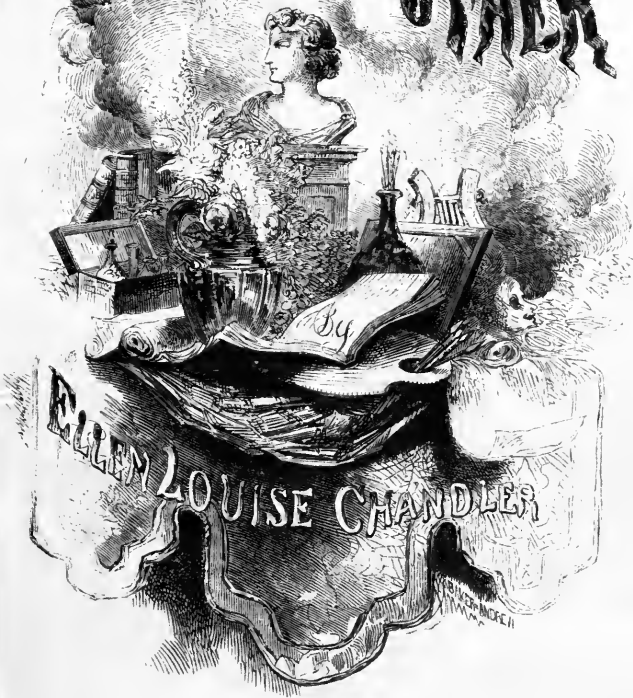


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THIS, THAT, AND THE OTHER



BOSTON:

Phillips, Sampson, and Company.



THIS, THAT, AND THE OTHER.

BY

ELLEN LOUISE CHANDLER.

“There 's rosemary, that 's for remembrance ,
And there 's pansies, that 's for thoughts ;
* * * And there 's a daisy.”

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY ROWSE

FIFTH EDITION.

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To Her

WHOSE EYES WERE FIRST TO SMILE UPON MY
INFANT SLUMBERS, WHOSE LIPS WERE FIRST TO OFFER ME ENCOURAGEMENT,
AND IN WHOSE HEART I HAVE NEVER FAILED TO FIND A HOME,

This earliest of my efforts

IS INSCRIBED, WITH A DAUGHTER'S LOVE.

1125437



P R E F A C E .

WITH what aim I have gathered these sketches into a volume, I can hardly say. I certainly have never aspired to be a professional book-maker, and my highest ambition is to find *friends* among my readers; those who dream over my pages beneath the trees in summer, or turn the leaves beside the cottage hearth in winter.

I have not borrowed from the dead world of books. I have only grouped together such fancies as the country sunshine writes out upon the meadow-grass, or the wild birds sing to each other while they build their nests. I have always found the world so kind, I do not doubt that there are some who will remember that my flowers are only violets of the spring, and will pardon me when they fail to find the splendor of summer or the mellow ripeness of autumn.



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THE ORPHAN'S TASK.

“O, MOTHER, it's *so* cold here! I shall freeze, I know I shall; and, mother, just see how blue the baby's hands are! You *won't* stay in this dreadful place *much* longer, will you? And say, mother, why don't father come?”

Yes, that was it—“Why don't father come?” Marion Leslie had asked herself that question a great many times, since the sunny morning when her noble husband had clasped her to his heart, two long years before, with words of blessing, and joined his good ship for a six months' voyage. Weary, weary days and nights she had asked herself, “Why don't he come?” and the wind and rain sobbed through the linden-trees, and gave no answer but a wail. Six months after his departure, Marion had clasped to her breast a babe, on which its father's eyes had never rested; and a faint, sweet smile rippled round her red lips, as she thought how *he* would take them in his arms, and bless them, the mother and the child. But weeks were braided into months, and yet he came not. There was a rumor, very brief, and very terrible, that his ship was wrecked, and all on board perished; but Marion never believed it,—how should she?—and still she sat there in the cottage, singing to her babe sometimes, and sometimes weeping, and asking herself, between her
bs, why it was her husband did not come.

But there was a change, at length—an execution in the house. At first, Marion looked on listlessly, neither caring nor understanding; but at last the truth broke on her with a sudden shock, and she arose. They were beggars. She understood *that*; and then it was beautiful to see the triumph of her woman's love and courage. She went forth with her three fatherless children,—her daughter Blanche, her little Charley, and the baby not yet three months old,—forth from the smiling cottage, out into the cold, desolate world.

It was a beautiful home from which she was driven—the home of her bridal, the home of her wife-hood, whither her husband had borne her, with the orange-blossoms in her hair, ere the suns of seventeen bright, summery years had woven their radiance in her golden curls. There, for fourteen years, they had lived and loved, with only the one sorrow of his necessary absences; for Marion was a sailor's bride. She had been a spoiled and petted child, and a still more petted wife; and now that misfortune had come upon her, she was too proud to suffer in the pleasant country-town among those who had known and loved them in their brightest days. And this was why, having collected what money she was able to command from the sale of her few valuables, she gathered her stricken ones around her one morning, and departed,—no one knew, and only a few cared, whither. Other hands lit the hearth-fire at Maple Cottage, and its rosy light beamed upon happy faces; and there came no shadow of those suffering ones who had once lived and loved there, to dim the picture.

Marion Leslie found a refuge, with her children, in one of the humblest of the many cheap boarding-houses of New York.

For a long time she could procure no employment, but at length, by dint of persevering inquiry, she obtained regular work from a cheap clothing-store in the neighborhood. But they had sunk from one privation to another, until eighteen months after their coming to New York (the time at which our brief sketch opens), when their home, if home it could be called, was but a miserable attic, in Paradise-square. Marion had grown very thin, but there was a wild lustre in her blue eyes, a hectic flush on her pale cheek; and you could not have met her, without a start of surprise, at finding, robed in patches, and dwelling in misery, the very embodiment of some painter's conception of a Saint Cecilia. She sat there, bending over her rickety pine table, and stitching wearily, while the baby lay sleeping on a couch of straw at her feet; and the little Charley, clinging to her robe, clasped his stiffened fingers together, and strove not to cry. So early do the children of the poor learn patience.

At last the mother stopped for a moment, and drew her little boy upon her knee. "Charley," she said, "mother's dear Charley, are you so very cold? Well, sister Blanche will come home presently, and then Charley shall be warmed and fed. Mother's little boy can wait, can't he?"

"Yes, mother, I can wait. *I don't freeze much now*, do you, mother?" and the little fellow wound his thin, cold arms round the weary woman's neck, and kissed away the tears that were streaming down her thin cheeks. And then the door-latch was raised softly, and a young girl of fourteen tripped lightly in. Spite of all the disguises of wretchedness, spite of the clumsy shoes, the coarse, patched garments, and the half-frozen fingers, Blanche Leslie was beautiful. Hers was not the mere beauty of

feature and complexion, through which looks oftentimes deformity of soul; but it was that perfect and harmonious beauty, which only one painter in a cycle of centuries can shadow forth. Her long, golden curls floated down over her spiritual face, like rippling waves of sunlight; and her features were pure and classical, as the Madonna of Thorwaldsen. A glad smile illuminated her face as she entered the apartment, and, going up to her mother, she exhibited, with eager interest, two twenty-five cent pieces.

"Only see, dear mother," she cried, joyfully, "was n't Mr. Green good? Here are two shillings he owed you for work, and here are two shillings more, that he just made me a present of; and he spoke to me so gently, mother dear, and put his hand upon my head, and drew my curls through his fingers, just as father used to, long ago; and then he said it was a shame for one so delicate as you to have to do such work, and for a child like me, too; — that it must not be, and he could put me in a way of doing something better; and he said I must not let you tire yourself with coming to the shop any more; that I must always come for you. Was n't he good, mother?"

"God is good, my child," said Marion, solemnly, and, for a moment, she drew the girl's fair head to her bosom. "Now, go darling," she said, smiling through her tears, "go and get some fagots, and a loaf of bread, for these poor children are almost starved and frozen."

And as Blanche left the room Mrs. Leslie sighed bitterly. O, is not suspicion one of the most blighting curses of poverty? Marion had striven to teach her daughter faith in the beauty and purity of human nature, but painfully was the conviction forced

upon her mind, that hereafter the widow's child must learn a different lesson. Blanche was too poor, and too beautiful, to be spared the luxury of trust. Grafton Green was a plodding, scheming man of the world, and not the one to give even two shillings from a pure motive of disinterested kindness; and Marion resolved that, no matter how much she was needed at home, or how much she suffered, *she* must be the only one hereafter to visit the rich man's clothing-store.

Another year passed, and still the wretched family lived on, in the miserable attic in Paradise-square. And yet they were not wholly wretched, not wholly miserable. There was faith and prayer, and much love, beneath their humble roof; and the baby, the little Ida Leslie, was growing up fair and sweet enough to have gladdened any heart not wholly broken. She was a perpetual joy to her mother, for only in her face could she see an ever-present semblance of her lost Willie. Blanche and Charley had Marion's own blue eyes, and golden curls; but Ida's heavy tresses were black as night, and her large, dark eyes were wild and passionate as an Italian's;—they were Willie's own. But there was more sorrow than joy in the lonely roof. The pain in the mother's side was growing more constant and severe; the hectic flush was deepening on her cheek, and slowly, but surely, she knew her feet were entering the path that leads down to the country of the great departed, "into the silent land."

For many a month Blanche had been the only messenger to the clothing-store of Grafton Green; and whether it was that the unsoiled innocence of the sweet young girl had subdued, by its silent power, even his wicked and worldly heart; or whether it was that he was waiting for the mother's death, that he might

be more secure of success, he had, during all this time, treated Blanche with the greatest respect. But the kindest friend the lone ones had as yet found was a tall, graceful, beautiful woman, living by herself, on the lower floor of the house. Marion did not know her business, or whence came the means to purchase her welcome and delicate offerings of fruit and flowers; but she never dreamed of doubting the stranger's purity, and had learned to love her with a sister's fondness. "There comes Lady," said the little Ida, one day, when the woman entered; and Marion, looking up, with a sweet smile, said, "Will you not let us have some other name to call you by?"

"Clara was the name I bore when I was young and happy," said the stranger, sadly; and from that time the little Ida called her "Lady Clara;" and in truth the name suited well the proud, statuesque style of her faded but still regal beauty.

"I am going to die, Lady Clara," said Marion, solemnly, one day, when the little Ida was sleeping on the stranger's lap, and Charley had gone on an errand with his sister Blanche.

"Yes," was the reply, "and I have long been wishing to make a proposal to you. I am an actress. I presume, Mrs. Leslie, you have looked, as I once did, on actresses, with holy horror. I think, however, you already know me well enough to believe that my life has been free from crime. I have, indeed, been unfortunate," she continued, while her finely-chiselled upper lip curled with a half-sneer, "and there are those in the world to whom suffering and misfortune are the worst of crimes. My story has not been a singular one. I was born in the highest circle of metropolitan aristocracy. I was an only child, and my

mother died when I was very young. My education was superficial; that is, I was required to learn only such things as I pleased; and I confined my studies chiefly to the modern languages and music, of which I was passionately fond. The legitimate result of such a self-willed course of training was a runaway marriage with a handsome but dissolute soldier; and yet I loved him. O God, how I *did* love him!" and the proud woman clasped her white hands across her brow, and wept for a brief moment of tempestuous agony, and then, with a firm voice, she proceeded. "It was not a twelvemonth before my husband wearied of his plaything, and left me. I thanked God then that I was not a mother; but I have thought since it might have been better if there had been a childish voice to call me back to life. Already my poor father had died, and I took to my heart the knowledge that I had brought his gray hairs to the grave. Soon after his death, a will was produced—though I was always doubtful of its authenticity—endowing his brother's sons with all his vast fortune. I do not know as the will could have been set aside; I surely would not have questioned it; for I was far too proud to go back among the circles I had adorned in other days, as a deserted wife; and I bore my griefs alone, as best I might. At first, I strove to support myself, as you have done, by needle-work. You know what a weary, torturing, slow-dividing of soul and body that is; and soon I began to loathe existence most intensely. At last, I sought an engagement at a third or fourth rate theatre, and my offer was accepted gladly. I am told that, if I had had ambition, I might have risen to be a queen of tragedy; but I had none.

"I would not go upon the boards of a first-class theatre, lest

should perchance be recognized by those who had known me in happier days ; and even where I am, I would only take the least conspicuous parts. I have chosen this ruinous, tumble-down habitation, because it suits both my altered taste and my altered means ; but I have managed to surround myself with many comforts, and, thank God, I have preserved, unsoiled, the purity of my heart and life.

“ And now, Mrs. Leslie, I have, as I said, a proposal to make to you. I have seen, for a long time, your anxiety about Blanche ; nor do I wonder at it. But Blanche is strong-principled, and strong-minded beyond her age. Now, if you will trust her to me, I propose to make her an actress. She can soon take a higher rôle of characters than I do, and will be able to support her brother and sister. I know you will think it a hard choice between this and starvation. I know your imagination will even exaggerate the trials and temptations of this career ; but think a moment, — *can* any other path be more, nay, can any other path be as much exposed to temptation, as that of a young and beautiful sewing-girl, whose scanty pittance hardly keeps her above absolute want, and whose very business exposes her in a thousand ways to the pursuit of the unprincipled and licentious ? Then there is one more consideration ; — as an actress, Blanche need not despair of finding time enough to become, at least, respectably educated ; while, should she grow up a seamstress, you are aware such a hope would be the height of absurdity. Blanche is well enough while you live, — I would not have her situation changed at present ; but I know it is your conviction that you cannot stay to guard her long ; and, not even though she were starving, would I say to her, ‘ Blanche, come with me to the

theatre,' unless I could also add, 'Blanche, my advice has your mother's sanction.' Shall I say it?"

"Leave me for a few moments, good, kind friend," was the reply, "and then I will answer you;" and, laying the little Ida gently down, the actress glided from the room. Left to herself, Marion Leslie knelt and prayed, long and fervently, — prayed as only an anxious, suffering mother can pray. She looked forward, with strained and aching eyes, into the future; she saw the place of thorns over which her loved one's tender feet must tread, and she prayed for strength to decide aright. At last, as she heard the returning footsteps of her friend, she rose from her knees, and, with a faint smile, whispered —

"Yes, I have decided. You may give my Blanche her mother's sanction and blessing on whatever course you approve. I leave her in your care, and, when I am gone, deal gently with her, for the sake of the dead."

"I accept the trust," said, very solemnly, she whom the child called "Lady Clara;" and, in a moment more, Blanche entered.

"Come hither, darling," said the mother, fondly, holding out her thin hand to Blanche; and Charley climbed upon her knee, and Blanche knelt down by her mother's side.

"Blanche, dearest, you have been a good and faithful child to me, and God will bless you, now, when I am gone, and forever."

"You gone, sweet mother!" and a look of mingled grief and terror drifted up to Blanche's clear, blue eyes.

"Yes, darling," — and Marion took in her hand the length of her fair child's golden curls, — "yes, darling, the wild-flowers of another spring-time will blow above your mother's nameless

grave, and my little ones will be God's orphan children then! No, no, Blanche, darling, treasure, don't weep so wildly! — I'm very weak, Blanche; I can't bear it." And the brave girl struggled with herself till moans subsided to sobs, and sobs to quiet tears, and then her mother continued: "It would be sinful to mourn so for me, my darling; for I am going home to Jesus. I may stay with you for some time yet, but I must go when He calls me, and then Clara will take care of you."

The next morning Blanche awoke just as the first sun-rays were brightening the attic windows. The poor children had crept early to bed the night before, for they had no money to buy lights or fuel, and Blanche could not carry home the work they had completed till the morning. It had been a bitter cold night, but Blanche, with the little Charley in her arms, had slept soundly. When the sunlight flashed upon the windows, she started up in alarm, to see how late it was, and, hurrying on her scanty supply of raiment, she glanced at the low couch of straw where her mother lay sleeping. The tears came to her eyes as she whispered, "Poor, dear mamma, she is so ill! She sleeps late this morning, and I guess I'll carry this work home before I wake her;" and then, gathering up the work into a bundle, she stepped softly to her mother's pallet, to give her one gentle kiss before she left her. God of the fatherless! The lips to which she pressed her own were cold and pale as marble. Marion Leslie was dead!

Another meek victim "led as a lamb to the slaughter;" another sacrifice offered up to the mighty Moloch of trade, and that iron custom which closes to a woman the avenues of healthy and respectable employments; another soul gone up

before its Maker, crying out for vengeance against the mighty of the land!

There are, who think death steals into the habitations of the poor almost in the guise of an angel of light; that, because their paths are hedged about with troubles and choked up with thorns, the echo of the familiar foot-fall is not missed; that, because the rain and storm beat upon their heads, the rain of sorrow fails to fall upon the grave of the departed; but those who read the "short and simple annals of the poor" will trace another record. There were tears, and wailings, and sorrow, in the tumble-down house in Paradise-square, when the body of Marion Leslie was borne forth to the burial. The fair hair banded across her forehead was wet with tears; and it was as if she wrenched out, and carried away with her, other hearts beside her own. And why not? If all things are bright around us, there is less room for the shadow to fall. The difference is between taking his single sun-ray from some lone prisoner in dungeon-walls, or leaving one beam the less to brighten the splendors of the royal palace.

It was a week after the funeral, when one morning Clara reminded the sorrowing Blanche of the bundle of work not yet carried home to the clothing-store of Grafton Green.

"Yes, yes," said the young girl, abstractedly; "where is it? I must go to work, I know. I'll take it now."

"Wait a moment," said the actress, "and I will go with you to carry it;" and she robed herself in a costume which, to the uninitiated eyes of Blanche, seemed the height of elegance. And, in truth, she looked more than ever worthy of her title—"Lady Clara"—when the heavy folds of a rich and costly

mantle fell gracefully about her tall and slender figure, and her wrists and throat were muffled in soft and glossy furs.

"Now, Blanche," she said, when she had completed her toilet, "I will go with you; but you must wait till a moment after I have gone in, and not on any account appear to recognize me!"

When Blanche entered the store, she was surprised to see the deference accorded by the clerks to her richly-dressed companion. The actress stood at a counter at the further end of the store, turning over, with an air of fashionable indifference, some finely-stitched collars and cuffs. The young girl entered timidly, and, stepping up to Mr. Green himself, she said, in a low, musical tone, "Here is that last work, sir. Won't you please to excuse my not having brought it home before? for my mother is dead!"

A strange kind of expression flitted over the rich man's features, — Blanche thought it anger, the actress called it triumph. "I should be glad to indulge you, if I could, poor child!" he said, with a strange gentleness; "but I must treat all my girls alike, and the rule is, if any one keeps work out a week, it must be charged to them, and they are to retain it. So, you see, I must charge this now, Blanche, — twenty shillings, — but the charge is a mere matter of form; you are too young and fair to suffer, and I'll give you some easy work to do now, and we'll settle about that, another time."

"Blanche," said Lady Clara, coming forward, "I expected this — trust in me, poor child! Mr. Green, you said your charge against this girl was twenty shillings; here is your money, and we'll just make you a present of the garment, to

atone for your disappointment. Come, Blanche; wish Mr. Grafton Green a very good-morning; you will take no more work from his establishment!"

Mr. Grafton Green muttered something altogether too near an oath to be written down for ears polite, and the actress took the fair girl's hand in hers, and left the "establishment," with a patronizing courtesy. When, at length, they were seated with Charley and the little Ida in the apartment of "Lady Clara," in reply to Blanche's tearful, "O, Clara, what shall I do? we shall starve!" the lady unfolded her plan, and endorsed it with the dead mother's sanction. "I have paid up for your miserable attic, dear Blanche," she concluded, "and settled up accounts with your landlord. I have been laying by money for this very thing, Blanche, and now you shall stay with me, you and the little ones, until you can do better; and I will support you, until you can support yourself."

And thus it was, climbing up, on to the stage, from weary stepping-stones of toil, and want, and sorrow, one of our first actresses made her *début*. "You have nothing to do now but study," said Clara, when the preparatory arrangements were completed; and Blanche did study, as none can but those who have a high and holy motive. She had not adopted her profession without a bitter struggle,—not until every other door seemed closed against her, and she had seemed to hear her dead mother's voice, out of the grave, calling on her to arise and toil for the children so sacredly given to her charge.

It was her highest ambition that they, for whom she thus sacrificed herself, should never know at what a cost the flowers which strewed their path were purchased. While they were yet

so young, it was very easy to send them to bed, before she made her toilet for the theatre; and, as they grew older, she hoped to be able to take a higher part, and so acquire the means to send them away from her to school. Years passed on, and her wishes were accomplished. At twenty, she found herself promoted to the highest characters in the first theatres, and she had the satisfaction of calling home her little sister on the Sabbath, and learning, from the love of that innocent child-heart, that earth was not all a wilderness. As for Charley, he was sent far away, and growing hale and hearty, as his sister saw, when the happy trio assembled with Clara, at a quiet, rural, country boarding-house, for the summer vacation.

At twenty, Blanche Leslie was beautiful,—proudly beautiful. Her success as an actress had been almost unexampled, for one so young; and she had found time and means to secure a brilliant education. The promise of her childhood was more than fulfilled. Her large, radiant blue eyes revealed the gifted soul looking through them, and her complexion was fair and pure as the finest statuary. Her figure was lofty and commanding, tall, and with sufficient fulness to be graceful as a vision; and altogether she was the most magnificent *tragedienne* that ever appeared upon the boards of New York.

And now there dawned another dream upon her life. One night there came behind the scenes a stranger, whom the manager introduced to her as his friend, Lionel Hunter. It was to Blanche like a revelation. She had never before met such a man. Her acquaintance was limited to the circle of the green-room, and no one had hitherto found lodgment in her heart for

more than a passing thought; but this man — this Lionel Hunter!

You might not have thought, at the first glance, that he was a man to strike a lady's fancy; but I, who have seen and known him, tell you that no man ever came so near realizing my conceptions of the divine as Lionel Hunter. I never looked at him, but I held my breath, and thought of those old times, when the sons of God loved the daughters of men — when there were Titans on the earth, and Nature, our primal mother, wove stars in her dark hair for her bridal. He must have been at least six feet two inches in height, and proportionately large. His face resembled, more than anything else, the portraits we have all seen of Shakspeare. He was handsomer than the portraits, it is true; but there was the same expansive forehead, the same indescribably fascinating eyes, and the same sensuous mouth, with its expression of almost infantile sweetness. His eyes were large and bright, of a liquid hazel, and his chestnut-black hair curled over his classical head, down almost to his shoulders.

“My friend,” said the manager, as he presented him, “is the author of the last new play we brought upon the stage; and he wishes to thank you, Miss Leslie, for having so gloriously personated one of his best characters.”

And then he took Blanche's little hand in his own; and while it lay there, fluttering like a caged humming-bird, he spoke a few low, musical words of praise and thanks, which brought the rich blood flushing to the fair girl's cheek, as it had never flushed before. That night he walked with her to her home; for she and “Lady Clara” had removed from Paradise-

square, and now had taken pleasant rooms at a respectable hotel. After that, Blanche was no more lonely. Almost daily Mr. Hunter would meet her in her walks, and sometimes accompany her home.

Then, the enthusiastic girl lived on the memory of that meeting, until she should see again her hero, her demi-god. Sometimes there was but a chance interview of a few words, and sometimes she would not see him for a day; but there would be a quick ring at the door, and a bouquet of flowers left for Miss Leslie. And these were always the costliest exotics, or heavy clusters of the fragrant climbing roses, with long stems; so that always in Blanche Leslie's parlor was summer, and the breath of flowers. Perhaps it was not well for the inexperienced girl that Lady Clara's voice had failed her, and she was spending the winter in the country; but surely never before had life seemed half so bright.

At last, Mr. Hunter came often to her rooms. Another of his tragedies was to be produced, and, that she might be perfect in her part, he read it to her many times at home. Surely, never was another voice so musical; and Blanche could not refuse, when the play was over, to listen to yet other plays, and hear the glorious creations of the master dramatist himself made vocal. It was the day before Miss Leslie's last engagement previous to the summer vacation, and once more Lionel Hunter sat beside her in her room. Somehow it seemed a very natural thing, and his broad breast had grown to be the customary resting-place for her sunny head.

He sat beside her now, and once more he had drawn that fair head underneath his arm, and was gazing fondly in her upturned

face. "Blanche," he said at length, in a deep, musical whisper, — "Blanche, darling, tell me once more that you love me. O, dear one, my life has been a weary thing sometimes; there have been dens and dark places in it; but you have walked beside me for a while, and my path has grown radiant with the glory of your soul. O, Blanche, Blanche, best, purest half of myself, I could not live without you now! — tell me once more that you love me!" And the proud man paused, and bent his face to catch the whispers of her answer, till he could feel her breath warm upon his cheek.

There was truth, and passion, and tenderness, in the girl's voice, as she murmured, "O, my Lionel, my lion-hearted! you *know* I love you — you know I could not help it."

And his face bent lower still, as once more he said, "And Blanche, *my* Blanche, will you be all mine, and forever?"

"Forever," was the faintly-whispered reply; "I love you, — how could I be another's?"

"And you will not love me less, Blanche, when I tell you I am not the humble, plodding scribbler you have thought, but a man rich in fame and wealth, whose name is a passport to the proudest circles in the land. Can you be proud of me, Blanche darling, and not love me less?"

But the tears gathered slowly in the young girl's eyes, and trembled on the heavy lashes, as she replied, "But *you*, Lionel; if this be so, how can you love me? Will you not blush when men shall say your wife has been an actress?"

"Great heavens, Blanche! have you been deceived, all this time? Did you think I meant to marry you? Why, Blanche, that would be certain ruin. Have you so little trust, so little

faith in me, that you think I would be more true to you, when some old priest had said over a few words of a senseless ceremony? I thought you loved me. Well, no matter, Blanche; I was deceived — I can bear it — take your head off my breast — get up, and go away. Why *don't* you go? In Heaven's name, what are you staying here for?"

"Because I love to stay, Lionel, and because I will never stay again. O, Lionel, you have darkened all my life! Why *did* you come to me, with your bright, bewildering beauty?"

"*Why?* Because I loved you, because I thought your heart was not that of a stone, but a woman. Stay, now; what are you getting up for? Blanche, sit still!"

"No, I shall get up now, and you will go and leave me forever."

"I shall do no such thing. I will go and leave you till to-morrow, and then I'll come back, and say 'Blanche, will you be mine?'" and he rose, and walked toward the door; but turning, ere he reached it, he spread out his arms, and said, in those low, rich tones that never could have belonged to any human voice but his, "Come to me, Blanche darling, come and lay your little golden head upon my breast. Who else can shelter you so well as I? You have said that I was your world. Be true to me, then, — true to your own soul, clinging even now to mine, — and come to me. Is the world more than I am, Blanche?"

"No, sir, no," and the young girl shut her eyes, and clasped her white hands across them. "No, sir, but *God is*, and the voice of my dead mother calling to me out of her grave! Go, Mr. Hunter!"

"Do you mean it, Blanche? Do you mean to say I shall go away and never see you any more — that you will no more live

for me, nor I any more live for you? That we are to be nothing to each other, any more?"

"That is what I mean, Mr. Hunter."

He walked slowly and deliberately back again, and raised her in his arms. "Look at me, Blanche, and tell me, now, do you mean to say, Go, Lionel, go, and never look upon my face again!"

"Yes, yes, Mr. Hunter; I mean to say just that: — Go, and never come again, and in mercy go quickly."

"You mean to say, Go and come again to-morrow;—that is my reasonable Blanche. You are feverish and excited now, and would indeed be best alone;" and, so saying, he kissed her gently, released her, and walked to the door. Then, turning once more, he said, "Good-by till to-morrow, Blanche, little one. Let me see you happy, then!"

It was two o'clock, the next afternoon, when Lionel Hunter rang at the door of Miss Leslie's boarding-house. He was shown into her accustomed sitting-room, but she was not there. He threw himself into her easy-chair, and lying on the table beside him he perceived two notes, directed in a light, graceful hand, which he recognized but too well — the one to him, the other to the manager of the Broadway theatre. Eagerly he broke the seal of the one superscribed "Lionel Hunter," and read thus:

"LIONEL: When your hand touches this sheet, I shall be far away. It is two hours since you left me, and I have been sitting here all the while, in a kind of stupor. I have loved you very fondly, Lionel, and there is no blame for you in my heart

now, only sorrow, bitter, crushing sorrow. I will believe that you love me — that you did not mean to deceive me! I will even try to think that the fault, the misunderstanding, was all mine. My soul shall send back only prayers for you — my heart shall breathe only blessings. I love you, Lionel — O, *how* I love you! If I could coin my life-blood into a flood of blessing, and pour it on your head, I would do so gladly; if I might die for you, my soul would be blessed as the angels. I even have thought, — may God forgive me! — that I could give my soul to perdition for your sake; but I have no right to bring sorrow, and shame, and suffering, upon another. The lips that my little sister presses must be pure; the life consecrated by a dying mother's blessing must be unstained.

“Lionel, Lionel, how I have loved you! — But I go! I dare not trust myself to look again upon your face! I must not write longer here. It is time already I had made my few preparations. O, it is hard to tear myself even from this sheet, which seems to link me to you. Do not, do not suffer, dearest Lionel! On earth we meet no more; but in heaven, if you keep your heart pure, I will know you and call you by your name, and I — I will still and forever be your

BLANCHE LESLIE.”

A deep, anguished groan burst from the heart of Lionel Hunter, as he pressed the note again and again to his fevered lips. “Lost, lost, lost!” It seemed a dirge with which the whole creation was groaning. Then, for the first time, he knew how madly he had loved Blanche Leslie; then, he knew it would have been but a light thing to have laid down fame, and wealth, and this world's honor, so that her head could have lain

upon his bosom, so that he could have called her his wife. But it was too late. Lionel Hunter was not one to yield to circumstances tamely, or without a struggle. He had found the eidolon of his life's long dreams; had looked into her eyes, had held her head upon his heart; and now she was gone—now that he *would* have called her wife, he could not. At first there seemed a kind of injustice in it. He forgot that she had fled because of her very love, not from him, but from temptation; and the proud man ground his teeth together, and then sat down in the chair her form had pressed, and moaned helplessly.

Ten years had passed. It was the rich, hazy autumn. A kind of misty, Indian-summer glory lay all over the broad landscape, and flooded with its radiance the pleasant parlor of an elegant little cottage, in the suburbs of New Orleans. The room was tenanted by two ladies, both graceful, both elegant, but neither young. Thirty summers had woven their meshes of light in Blanche Leslie's fair tresses, and over them the moon must have risen in a night of sorrow; for among the golden curls were threads of silver. Her features were purer, and more spiritual in their outline, and her thin figure had lost none of its grace.

“Three weeks more, Lady Clara,” and, as she spoke, you might have fancied her voice had in it the low, touching music of a Peri shut out of Paradise, and pleading that the gates might be reöpened,—“three weeks more, and Ida's school-days will be past forever. How can I manage then? How shall I any longer spare her the knowledge that her sister is an actress?”

“You can hardly hope to conceal it longer, Blanche; and why should you wish it? Surely, dear one, in your pure life there is nothing for which to blush. In my anxiety, when you left New York so suddenly, I had nearly betrayed your secret. O, Blanche, you can never dream the relief it was, when I got your letter, telling me your assumed name, and requesting me to join you at New Orleans. I was really thankful when Charley entered the navy; for, if he had staid at home, both he and Ida must surely have long since known your secret; though, really, Blanche, I never could see your reasons for concealment.”

“O Clara!” and the poor girl shuddered as she spoke, “you would see, if you knew all. Sometime I’ll tell you why I left New York so suddenly. God in heaven be thanked, I’ve been able so far to prevent Ida from even seeing the inside of a theatre! I can bear to have my life blank and dark, if I can make my mother’s child happy. — What! a letter, Anne?” as the servant entered. “That must be from some one at the green-room. I hope they don’t want me for a rehearsal.”

But why did her cheek grow pale, and her hand tremble, as she glanced at the superscription, and nervously broke the seal? and what was there in its contents to bring the hot, bitter tears up from their fountain in her strong, proud heart? “Blanche,” it said —

“BLANCHE LESLIE, — For something tells me you are Blanche Leslie yet—I have found you at last, after these weary years. Listen, and hear if it be not destiny. When you left me, Blanche, I was a heart-broken, miserable man. You did not know me, little

darling, or you never would have gone. I did not know myself. I did not know how strong was the love I had for you. Blanche, believe me, for I swear it before heaven, I never would have asked you to make one sacrifice for my sake. You should have done nothing, been nothing, your own heart did not sanction. When I read your note, I awoke to the knowledge of my own soul. Then I knew that, without you, wealth, and fame, and honor, were worse than vanity, hollower than the apples of Sodom. I would have laid down everything I possessed on earth, to have called you wife. My soul cried out for you 'with groanings that could not be uttered.'

"For a month, Blanche, I was nearly crazy. I did nothing. I shut myself up, and never closed my eyes. I said nothing but 'Blanche! Blanche! Blanche!' Then there came to me a resolve to find you, and I went forth. For all these weary years, I have given myself to the search. Sometimes I wandered into the obscurest alleys and dens of misery, for I would wake from terrible dreams, to fancy you suffering — dying, perhaps, of starvation. Then I would seek you in the haunts of fashion; for all this time, Blanche, never once did the thought visit me, that you might be another's. I knew you were true to me. I knew, wherever you were, my name was written upon your heart. I judged your love by the resistless might of my own.

"It is strange, Blanche, but all these years I never once entered a theatre until last night. I thought you would expect me to seek you there, and so avoid them; and I loathed their very atmosphere. I cannot tell why this feeling should have taken possession of me, but it was so. Last night my mood

changed. Something told me, as I passed the brilliant lights, to enter. I strolled into a box in the corner, and, Blanche, I saw you. Saw you! Can you understand how my whole being was electrified? I was wrapped in a trance of joy. The weary, weary past seemed like some horrible night-mare; and, O, the wakening was so glorious! I could not see you last night at your own home, and yet I could not leave you. I followed you and guarded your door the whole night, like a sentinel, and only this morning I have come home to write this letter. Blanche! Blanche! was I indeed so near you without your knowing it? or did your heart thrill, as in a vision, because I was near, and then your reason chide you for the fantasy?

“I cannot talk of all that terrible past. It is over now. Let us forget it. I will be with you presently; and then, then, little darling, I will feel those warm arms about my neck,—I will draw the fair head to my bosom, and the beauty of my dreams shall be my wife! O, Blanche! how many weary years I have wept and prayed for this! The seas have not been deep enough, nor the steep mountains ever so high, as to divide you from my vision. At night, I have taken in my hand the length of your golden curls, and felt my forehead baptized, in a dream, with your kisses. There,—I cannot write longer. I will come to you, and then, before God and man, you shall be mine, even as I am

Your

“LIONEL HUNTER.”

Blanche glanced around, when she had read it to the close; she was alone. Clara had stolen unperceived from the room.

She threw herself upon her knees, and prayed, for a brief moment, as only the suffering can pray; and, when she rose, her face was pale and tearful, indeed, but she had ceased to tremble. Going toward the open window, she drew before her a little inlaid ebony writing-desk, his gift in happier days, and wrote rapidly :

“No, no! Come not near me, Lionel Hunter! Disturb not the holy calm to which it has been the work of years to attain. I have wept much, suffered much, but I am stronger now. Talk no more to me of earthly love, now that my heart has grown old, and the beauty you used to praise has faded. Leave me, leave me! It is my prayer; it is all I ask. Over my night of sorrow dews have fallen, and stars have arisen; let me walk in their light! Only in heaven will I rest, if it may be so, my head upon your breast. Then, when the angels shall name me by a new name, I will steal to your side, and, looking back to earth, over the bastions of the celestial city, you shall call me

“BLANCHE LESLIE.”

“No, no, little darling, you shall not send me from you. I will call you my wife. You shall be Blanche Hunter. Look up, darling. Let me gaze into your blue eyes, life of my life! and, believe me, as God is in heaven, I will never leave nor forsake thee!”

And, dear me, reader! — but stories of real life always will end with a marriage, however much I may strive to prevent it, and my heroine behaved just like all other heroines; and it was not till years after, when Ida Leslie also sat among her husband

and her children, that she learned the furnace of affliction through which her sister's feet had trod ; and that she herself owed the joy and prosperity of her life-time, — not to Mrs. Lionel Hunter, leader of the ton, — but to Blanche Leslie, the Actress.

HEAVEN'S CHANCERY.

“I expect a judgment, shortly — at the day of judgment.”

BLEAK HOUSE.

FAST fell the snow; keenly blew the north-east wind; loudly rattled the hail-stones upon the frozen pavement. Wild and wet, and fierce with tempest, the long hours came rolling on; the black, scowling sky above, the gray, slippery stones beneath. Not a single carriage rumbled along the streets of the great city; still and silent it lay, like the hush of the grave, with only the storm stirring the pulsations of its mighty heart. It seemed to have folded round itself a pall of night and stillness, and gone to its shrouded sleep, haunted by ghosts of fearful dreams.

There were sumptuous halls there, where fair forms reclined on couches of crimson velvet; where the rosy light streamed over groups of statuary and rare paintings, in which old masters had wrought out such dreams as man dreams but once on earth, ere he wakes from them in heaven.

There was life, and light, and hope, within; there was black, surging storm without. The very watchmen had cowered within their boxes, and came not forth at the sound of a quick, firm step along the deserted side-walk. You would have started as you heard that foot-step, with its proud, defiant language. It

was a Wall-street broker, who had counted his gains late in the night, and was now returning homeward.

Suddenly behind him was heard another foot-fall. This one seemed to express a kind of dogged resolution, stung to madness.

Quickly they passed onward, those two, in the midnight and the darkness. There was little light at the street corner where the broker paused at last, — paused, for a strong hand was on his arm.

“Wretch! fiend!” whispered the stranger, “have we met at last?”

“‘Unhand you,’ do you say? ‘You do not know me?’—You do know me, and, by all the fiends, you shall know me better before we part! I loved once. Annie Lyle was fair and bright as the roses on a June morning. I thought she loved me,—and God knows how fondly I would have cherished her! but you crossed her path—you, sir—do you hear?”

“You were young and handsome, but with poison on your adder’s tongue. Annie was innocent and beautiful, but very poor,—poor people have no hearts, you know! You deluded your victim by a mock marriage, and then told her all, and left her to her shame.

“That girl died of a broken heart; and, with my hand on her cold, dead face, with its upturned, glassy eyes, I vowed to guard her child.

“You, I suppose, were happy. The arms of a beautiful woman were round your neck; one who would have spurned my Annie from her side. Ha! ha!—I wonder if the skeleton arms of that *dead* bride of yours never choked and strangled you in your dreams.





THE FATAL MOMENT.

“That child—your child and the poor dead girl’s—has grown up now; and when she came to you for gold (I sent her, to see if the father’s heart within you might not even yet be moved), you spurned her from your presence;—her, with her mother’s look in her face, her mother’s soul gazing out of those clear eyes. You, bold, evil man, dared to turn her child from your door, and whispered to her of bread that shame might bring. No, no! mean, pitiful wretch, it is no use to tremble—no use to mutter and deny! Pray, if you will, for there is short shrift before you—this hour you die!”

“Mercy! mercy!” pleaded the doomed man; but his cry was uttered to a heart whence all sweet mercy-drops had been washed out, long years ago, by bitter tears of agony.

“Mercy, ha! tell me, did you heed Annie’s prayer for mercy, when she clung to your knees, in her comfortless attic, and begged you to kill her with your own hands, and not leave her there to die of shame and want? Mercy! yes, there is a dagger at your side;—use it, if you list,—use it—or—die!”

And with that word the murdered man fell heavily, while one shriek, wild as the wail of a lost soul, rose loud and clear above the storm, above the clear voices which rung the peal of one from the lofty spire of Trinity!

It brought the startled watch to the spot, as if summoned by the clang of a trumpet; and a dozen night-lamps shed their lurid glare on the murderer’s face, as he coolly drew the reeking steel from the body of the dead.

* * * * *

A crowd was assembled in front of Sing-sing prison, for a soul was to go forth from thence to meet its Maker. The

by-standers held the morning papers in their hands, and scarcely dared even to breathe, as they lingered over the accounts of the justice and nobleness of the deceased, and the fearful incidents of his shocking, cold-blooded murder !

Hush ! hush ! All is very still now. The prisoner has been placed upon the scaffold, and turns to address the people.

“I am going to die now, fellow-citizens ; dear, *good* friends, such as the world has always been to me and mine. You have done me a great many favors, and this last one—this consent to let me die—is the greatest one of all ! I have appealed to another Court, and I go there to await my doom. I make no base, mocking denial, no plausible lies, to cheat the world of its sympathy. I killed him, and, could I kill him once more, I would indeed wish to live. He has left me no family to disgrace, and I go to a Court where Wall-street and the cell at Sing-sing stand on an equal footing.”

There were shouts, and jeers, and hisses, when the dead body hung there, in its cold chains, stark and stiff ; there were voices to whisper words of cheer, and trust in Heaven, to the proud widow of the Wall-street broker ; but I thought low to myself of the high Chancery where God will be the plaintiff, and, with little, half-crazed Miss Flite, I whispered, “I expect a judgment, shortly — at the day of judgment !”

CHANGE.

O WORD, colder, more bitter, more terrible than death ! Word, whose lightest meaning is a great gulf, with black, surging waters, over which not even the angel wing of Hope has power to pass.

Fearful spectre ! — how can I comprehend its meaning, when such fond arms are hedging me from care, such dear eyes making sunshine in my life ! We can put the grave-yard sod above a loved one's brow and live ; for we can weep over the grave, and put flowers on it. The pictured face, the curl of sunny hair, can be bathed in tears ; for Pride, that passion stronger than life, or love, and erewhile stronger than Heaven, forbids us not to shrine in our hearts the memories of the dead, to build altars to the loved, and lost, and gone before.

But Change ! When the dear lips smile still, but the smile is not for us ; when the curls are long and sunny, but our fingers may not twine them ; when the voice swells still with music, but the name on which it lingers is not ours, — then, indeed, are our life-paths written desolate ; then does stern Pride put her finger on our lips, and choke and strangle every thought that would breathe his name ; then do we lock up the olden memories in our hearts, and, struggling for escape in vain, they can only walk to and fro, like caged beasts.

It is a strange, mystic word ; whose meaning we only fully learn after months and years of anguish.

When the summer days are long, and they cannot watch with

us the blue light sleep on the distant mountains, or the day go down the sunset slopes, trembling to its death; when the hymn falters on our lips, and the prayers are hushed, because their voice joins not in them, there only steals to our souls a faint, creeping shadow of the desolation which is to come!

What wonder that our heart is baptized in tears, at the thought of another brow lying on the breast where only our head should have rested, of other lips being pressed to the shrine of our own idolatry? And yet it must be.

There is no rest, save that which broods, bird-like, with its great white wings, above the tide of death; no abiding-place, save the fields that lie so green and sunny in the God-light of heaven!

But fain would I put the evil day far off. Fain would I pray our Father that the sunlight may linger long about my home, and the day be a long time hid in the cloud of coming years, when time, or death, or fate, shall brand the heart I trust with the cold word Change!

A LEGEND OF THE SNOW-FALL.

WHAT sayeth the storm-wind, sighing ?

It bloweth with might and main,
And its touch on my aching forehead
Cools the throbs of my deathly pain.

It tells of a grave by the hill-side,
Where the wild winds madly blow,
And a heart that is cold and pulseless,
'Neath the fall of the hurrying snow.

And I think of a time in my cabin,
By the pine-fire's flickering light,
When a hand in my own lay trembling,
The whole of a lonesome night.

And he said, " Bend over and kiss me —
O friend, thou art dearer than all !
Let me feel thy touch on my forehead,
While the cold, white snow-flakes fall ! "

But my eyes were dim when I kissed him,
For well in my soul did I know
To the beautiful country of shadows
His feet would be first to go !

The wind was aloft in the chimneys,
And the snow was aloof, like the wings
Of a cloud of descending angels,
Or the blooms of a thousand springs!

But his thoughts went back to the summer,
And followed the pleasant ways
Where our foot-steps had wandered together,
In the long, bright summer days.

His thoughts gathered flowers on the uplands,
Where he never more might stray,
Till he cried, "My thoughts, they are angels,
Baptized in eternal day!"

Then there came to his forehead a glory
By the pine-fire's flickering blaze,
As I told 'twixt my sobbings the story
We had learned in those happier days:

How the good Christ was born in a manger,
And over the storm-waves of life
Walked with majesty simple and humble,
Saying Peace to their turbulent strife!

And when he went up into Heaven,
O'er the hills of eternal snow,
He promised his children should follow
Where he had been first to go!

Then my love, rising up from the pillow,
Said low, with his head on my breast,

“ O friend, I go forth in the morning,
To the fields of Eternal rest ! ”

And when the gray shadows of dawning
Swept over the cabin floor,
He said, “ I am weary, ah ! weary,
And cannot come back any more ! ”

Then the golden-fringed eyelids were folded
Close over his lustrous eyes,
And I heard, 'mid the storm and the tempest,
A summons from Paradise.

'T was sweet as the sorrowful closes
Of death-hymns chanted at night,
Or the breath of the folded roses,
On the dead man's shroud of white.

And I knew, when down through the snow-flakes
I heard those sweet tones fall,
'T was the voice of a summoning angel,
And my love must obey the call !

And, alack ! when there stole o'er the snow-drifts
The gold-shodden morning's tread,
The embers had faded to ashes,
And I was alone with my dead !

“I CANNOT MAKE HIM DEAD.”

HUSH! tread very lightly! The long shadows stretch across the floor, the canary is silent in the window, the air seems heavy with the perfume of the violets you hold in your hand.

There he lies, — your little Charlie! Yes, yours, for Charlie's mother has gone to sleep. They put her down in the cold, dark earth, in the gray of a winter's morning; daisies grow over her grave now, and wild birds, southern birds, with gay, brilliant wings, sing over her. Charley is yours.

Watch him as he sleeps. The eye is like yours when it opens, but the blue-veined lid that closes over it is his mother's. Those lips are hers! Do you remember how they trembled when you first told her your love, and how in long years they only parted to breathe for you words of gentle kindness? Sometimes you were impatient, petulant. O, how you repented it when it was too late! But nothing had power to dim the love-light in those clear blue eyes — nothing! not even death itself, for her last words were a blessing, when she died, and — gave you Charlie. O, how you have loved that boy! You have watched the breath of heaven, lest it fall too roughly on his cheek. You have buttoned your coat around you, as you

turned homeward, after a profitable speculation, saying to yourself, "Yes, he shall be rich, my Charlie."

But there came days when there was no little foot to meet you on the stair, no childish voice to whisper welcome.

The room, your room and Charlie's, was hushed and still; the nurse stepped softly; the whip you bought him hung upon the wall, and Charlie could only whisper faint words of thanks for the flowers or fruit you brought him as you hurried homeward. Now you have come once more to look upon him, as he slumbers. It is fearful, all this stillness. "Charlie," you say, "Charlie." Slowly the blue-veined lids uprise; the dark eyes—your eyes—look up to your other eyes.

Strange how bright they are! You put the violets in that tiny hand. He clasps them closely, but he whispers, "Papa, mamma has been singing me to sleep, and now she's calling me Kiss me, papa!" and with that last, fond kiss your little boy's eyes close, and the white dimpled hands tighten over the fresh flowers.

No need to step softly, lest you waken him. His mother guards her boy! No, no—you need not sob, or groan. Bear a brave heart, man!

Do you hear that carriage in the street? Do you hear the town-clock strike, and the church-bells peal? The world is going onward, brisk, lively, smiling as ever, with the joy-pulse beating at its great heart; and you, what are you, that you should make your moan, sitting there in the silence, holding your dead boy to your breast?

"You cannot make him dead," you say, and small need! The earth was a cold soil for your fair flower to grow in.

The Great Gardener has transplanted it to the ever-blooming gardens of Paradise. He is yours still! You have but nursed an angel for heaven! You have held him on your lap, cradled him in your arms, and when you have hushed him to rest laid him down on the bosom of Jesus. Nō, to you, Charlie "is not dead, but sleepeth!"

CHILDREN.

CHILDREN are troublesome comforts — no mistake about that. I always believed it, and lately I've had a new revelation — not exactly of the kind the angel Gabriel gave Mahomet, either.

When I want to go out, it's "Here, Nell, can't you take little Tom with you?" or, "Nell, if you could wait a few moments, here is Herbert wants to go to sleep, and you can still him quicker than anybody!"

I'm a feminine Job, naturally, but I must confess it puts even me out of patience, sometimes. Just to think of having my new sky-blue barège consecrated with tears and molasses, to say nothing of the way my white bonnet-ribbons are tugged at, when I enter the house, by half a score of urchins afflicted with pinafores, and a "What-have-you-brought-me" fever. I used to pride myself on immaculate white kids; but I had to give that up, long ago! I'd just like to see what one of those model, sweet-tempered Lady Esmonds would do, if she had my daily penance to go through with — if she found Honiton lace collars cut up for flounces to doll-baby ball-dresses, new silks maple-sugared with innumerable little finger-prints, velvet mantillas spread out on the bushes to bleach, and my *sanctum sanctorum* drawer of fineries turned into a menagerie!

Heigho! But I've learned to bear it with all the patience

imaginable; indeed, about those things, I am a model aunty, now-a-days.

But that's not the worst of it—I've got a beau! It's funny I should have,—every time I look in the glass I think how funny it is,—but no less true than strange!

Of course, Tom, and Will, and Herbert, and the rest, must needs have free *entrée* of mamma's parlor, and I can't say a word.

But just imagine my dismay when, at the breakfast-table, some cunning little mouth cries out, "O, mamma, don't you think, Mr. Smith never kissed us once! Should n't you thought he might, when he kept kissing Aunt Louise all the evening?"

You know it's not very fashionable to blush,—shockingly old-fashioned, indeed,—but, I'm rather unfashionable on some occasions.

And yet, after all, there is no more devoted lover of children than I am, in the main.

Dear, sweet little denizens of a world we are not pure enough to inhabit any longer!

I saw one on the Common the other day,—I was walking with *him*—I shan't tell you who *he* is though,—and suddenly, somewhat to his surprise, I came to a "dead halt" before a little two-wheeled baby-wagon. But such a beauty! "What is her name?" I asked. "Annie," was the reply.

I ought to have known before asking, for the name fitted the little, rosy, darling gypsy completely.

She was a poor person's child, one could see by all her appointments; but she was graceful as an opium reverie. Such a forehead as the tangled curls o'ershadowed; and such

eyes — large, black, laughing, saucy, and so deep! Such a little rose-bud mouth as it had; and, though it did laugh, I must needs stop to kiss it.

Sweet Annie! Little truant sunbeam! I wonder if thou wilt ever again smile on my life-path?

This world has a great many roads, and much I wonder if thou and I will ever again travel the same?

I wonder if thou art destined to look on human hearts, and melt them with thy great eyes! If it be thine to write thy name upon the age, with high thoughts and lofty deeds; or, perchance, if thou art holding one end of a golden chain, with which God's angels shall ere long draw thee to Heaven; while green grass and violets shall wave round a white headstone, on which stranger hands have graven "Annie!" I cannot say, — it may be that some other day, when thou and I are both older, I may pause again by the way-side to look upon thy beauty; or, it may be, we meet on earth no more, — but, God be thanked, after the day comes night, and there is one hostel for both of us at our journey's end!

THE ANTHEM.

ONE day, on a voyage of pleasure,
I entered a comet's car,
And followed the sun to the westward,
In his journey fiery and far ;
Till I saw where the barges of heaven
Lay moored, in the silence deep,
And the azure sea was pouring
Down over the heavenly steep.
Their canvas of clouds they were reefing,
And over their broad decks shone
The rays of eternal glory
That beam from the great White Throne!
But a chant arose when the comet
Was gallantly bearing down,
And it swept from the barges at anchor
To the towers of the heavenly town.
'Twas a band of heavenly minstrels,
And they chanted a heavenly song,
For never such anthems of glory
Bore earthly breezes along.
The stars of the morning sang treble,
And the water-spouts muttered their bass,
And the Asteroids joined in the chorus,
Each one from his far-off place.

And the thunder came in 'twixt the verses,
 With his grand adagio-tone,
And higher and higher the chorus
 Swelled up to the great White Throne!
And I took to my heart the lesson,
 As we glided silently past,
Where the infinite navies of heaven
 A shade on the azure sea cast —
That our voices must all do homage,
 Be our places near or far,
And praise must come up from the earth-worm,
 As well as the morning star!

5*

POOR MAUD.

“Melancholy is a fearful gift;
What is it but the telescope of truth,
Which strips the distance of its fantasies,
And brings life near, in utter nakedness,
Making the cold reality more real ?” BYRON.

HAVE you ever heard the shrieks, and shouts, and jeers, of a frantic madman? Have you seen the mocking laughter in his wild eyes, or the swollen veins knotted on his flushed brow? If so, you bear on your heart a daguerreotype of the wildest horror whose impress a human heart can bear. But there are milder and still more tearfully appealing phases of insanity, where the shattered intellect develops itself with a strange, rare beauty. It was many years ago that I spent the lustrous southern summer in a fair village of Louisiana. Villages are rarer there than at the north, but occasionally you find a church, a post-office and a school-house, and around them a few scattered houses. Such was the village of Oakly, where I was staying. It took its name from good old General Oakly, the largest landed proprietor in those regions. The friend I was visiting was no other than his fair daughter Kate, and Oakly Hall rang with our merriment.

Kate Oakly was as pretty a specimen of a southern girl as my Yankee eyes ever rested on. A brunette, tall and graceful, with an exquisitely moulded figure, and red lips and sparkling

eyes that might have charmed a hermit from his cell, or a Mahometan from his paradise. We were friends in the fullest sense, for we each had a lover of our own; so, of course, there was no quarrel to come between us. We had had sails, and rides, and drives, without number; and at last, one morning, taking a volume of Moore in our hands, we started out to vary the ordinary programme by a long ramble.

It was the seventeenth of June. Never was there a day more gloriously beautiful. The luxury of tropical sunshine had swelled the buds on the almond-trees to bursting, and the whole fair world around us seemed like a mighty garden. We wandered along the banks of a dimpling, leaping stream, till we came to a part of the grounds which I had never before visited. Suddenly, as we climbed a little height, there burst upon my view the fairest picture these eyes have ever witnessed. For a space, the brook ran more slowly, and its murmurs subsided into low, sighing dirge-notes. On its banks grew a fringe of drooping willows, dipping their long, green fingers in the dimpling water. On one side, where the bank sloped downward from the rivulet to a little dell, there rose a small, plain cross, exquisitely sculptured from the purest of Carrara marble. Around it was a neat and tasteful iron paling, overgrown with the climbing rose and trumpet-creepers; and on the cross itself hung tasteful garlands of the rarest flowers, evidently freshly gathered.

Nor was this all. Within the enclosure, her head bowed to the foot of the cross, knelt a female figure, in bridal robes. At the first glance, I thought she too was chiselled out of marble, she knelt there so still, and hushed, and breathless, with her white drapery falling about her. A band of orange-flowers was

braided in her long curls, and they were of almost silvery whiteness. Her face was so bowed upon the stone that I could not see it, but in a moment more she spoke.

“Come forth out of thy grave, O my beloved!” she murmured; “come forth! I have waited for thee these many years, and now, behold, I kneel here once more attired for my bridal. Come forth! The grave shall not hold me from thee! I fear not the worm. This cross is heavier on thy breast than my head ever was. Come forth! come forth!”

She seemed utterly unconscious of our presence. She paused a moment, then wound her arms about the cross, as if trying to lift it from the grave. Then she placed her ear to the ground to listen; and, rising up in a moment, shook her head in despair, and swayed her body mournfully to and fro, crying, wailingly,

“O, art thou false, my beloved? Dost thou not see the bridal garland, and the white robes? I am all ready, but I cannot die till thou comest. Come forth! come forth!”

Alas! alas! I too had loved. There was a breast where my head had rested, where it might rest never again forever; a sealed-up past, blistered with many tears, on whose leaves I dared not look; and I bowed my head upon my clasped hands, and wept in mortal agony. When once more I raised it, Kate was kneeling by my side, with her soft arms wound about me. The fierce despair which had swept over the mourner's soul seemed to have passed away, and she knelt beside the cross, binding over again the orange-flowers in her hair.

“It is well,” she said. “Peradventure he sleeps; or, perad-

venture, he has gone on a journey. I shall have time to make up my wreath."

Kate Oakly knew all my heart. She knew how I looked forth from the sheltering arms of my betrothed, to follow, with tear-dimmed eyes, the form of a weary pilgrim, climbing in loneliness the heights of fame. How thorns grew among the roses of my love, and my ears were deaf to the whispers of the present, as my soul roamed out into the shadow-land, thirsting and waiting for a voice which long ago said, "I love you, Nellie!" Therefore it was that I wept freely, with her soft arms wound about me, for Kate was no intrusive comforter; and when at last I smiled through my tears, pointing to the grave and the mourner, I could only guess the depth of her loving sympathy by the tender tearfulness of her voice as she replied:

"That is 'Poor Maud,' Nellie. Every one calls her so. Go and sit down with me under the thick trees, with your head in my lap, and I'll tell you her story."

In a moment we were seated at a little distance, partially screened from the grave by the fringe of drooping willows; and Kate began:

"Perhaps you noticed the name on the cross was Allan Oakly. He was my father's only brother; and I suppose a handsomer or more gifted man never trod the green fields of Louisiana. He was, I have been told, very different from my father. You know that papa is bluff, hearty and independent. Well, Uncle Allan was sensitive as a woman. His fine, firmly-knit figure was tall and slight. The lashes drooped over his olive cheek, and his large, dark eyes were passionate and languishing, except when kindled up by some martial ballad, or some strain of

impassioned song. My Uncle Allan was a soldier and a poet. He was born so. The very qualities that gave fire and intensity to his poetry nerved his heart on the battle-field. He chose arms for his profession before he was out of the nursery, and his whole education had been with a view to that end.

“His was the very nature to love with that intensity of passion which poets like him have sung; but his choice was a mystery. He was an eagle in his nature, and when before did the eagle ever swoop from his eyrie, and do homage to the dove? When, at nineteen, he came home from his military school, arrayed in brilliant uniform, friends and neighbors vied with each other in homage to his talents, and endeavors to enliven the summer he passed at home. But his wayward and impetuous nature would not be fettered by conventional restraints. He used to steal away from all the enticements of society, and wander for whole days in the vast solitudes of wood and plain. It was thus that he first met Maud Vincent. He was one day wandering in the forest, through which we rode the other day. You remember how beautiful it is, and how romantically it rises up, just behind the little country school-house. A New England schoolmaster taught there then,—a poor man, widowed and lonely, with but one child.

“My Uncle Allan had often passed the school-house, and paused under its eaves to hear the children sing; and, though he had never entered it, he was not without curiosity as to whose could be that clear, rich soprano voice, leading the whole, which swelled up to heaven with such bursts of melody. On the day in question, as he wandered through the forest, he came suddenly upon a sleeping maiden. He could not see her face,

for she lay upon a bank of moss, with her brow buried in her clasped hands. Her dress was of some cheap, cotton fabric, neat and simple; and the tiny foot that escaped from its folds was faultless, with its black slipper and snowy stocking. A little gilt-edged volume of the 'Loves of the Angels' had just escaped from the clasp of her dimpled fingers, and there she lay, like another Peri, with the sunshine wandering over her golden hair!

"Very gently Allan Oakly seated himself by her side, to watch her slumbers and wait for her awaking. Then he raised the book, and glanced at the passage she had been reading. A faint pencil-mark was traced along its margin, and it ran thus

' There was a maid, of all who move
 Like visions o'er this orb, most fit
 To be a bright, young angel's love,
 Herself so bright, so exquisite!
 The pride, too, of her step, as light
 Along the unconscious earth she went,
 Seemed that of one born with a right
 To walk some heavenlier element,
 And tread in places where her feet
 A star at every step should meet!'

"What more was needed? There was the charm of place and time, and then these words seemed traced as a magic picture of the beautiful sleeper. He laid down the book, and looked at her in an unconscious ecstasy. At that moment she languidly raised her fair head, and the soldier-poet did homage to the full radiance of her beauty. Her figure was slight and delicate;

her face pure as a seraph's, with its calm brow, clear, blue eyes, and the lights and shadows floating over it like the charmed atmosphere of a dream. Allan Oakly looked and worshipped; and when the maiden, who started on perceiving him, would have fled, very respectfully he laid his hand on her arm to detain her, and said, gently, 'The soldier could never wrong what the poet adores. I have watched your slumbers, and, now that I have waited for you, will you not give me a moment? Tell me, bright nymph of the forest, what do they call you when you go among mortals?'

"My name is Maud Vincent," was the quiet reply, "and I am the schoolmaster's daughter."

"The conversation, the pleasant interview which followed, were but the first among many. The young girl's heart yielded itself up to his pleadings, in a flood of delicious, trembling joy; and Allan Oakly wreathed with flowers his sword and lyre, and laid them at the feet of the maiden of nineteen. When they parted in the autumn, it was with the understanding that they were betrothed, and the marriage was to be celebrated the next summer. 'It shall be when the June roses blow, Maud, darling,' said the soldier-lover, — 'June 17th, for that is your birth-day, dearest; and your father shall give you to me the same day on which God gave you to him.'

"My Grandfather Oakly was a proud, stern man. You have seen his portrait, Nell. It hangs in the long gallery. From time to time my Uncle Allan had resolved to tell him of his betrothal, and implore his blessing. But he was withheld by a knowledge of his father's stern pride and ambition. My father, who was at that time very young, was his only confidant, and

papa, loving his elder brother almost to idolatry, never dreamed of opposing his wishes. The winter passed very happily to sweet Maud Vincent, cheered by frequent letters from her betrothed. She loved him with a purity and singleness of heart, that it was beautiful to see. The letters of his name spelt her universe, and, like a sleep-walker cheered by glorious visions, she passed on, heeding not cold, or darkness, for the summer that was in her heart.

“In the spring they met once more, and Allan Oakly forgot the doubts and shadows that lay heavy around his own heart, while gazing into the sweet blue eyes of his plighted bride. In those days, and especially in the plantation-districts of Louisiana, parental authority was by no means the light thing it is regarded now. No Romanist ever shunned the maledictions of the Pope with a more fearful awe, than children, then, the curses of their father. And perhaps, in all the country round, there was not another man regarded with so servile and timid a respect as my Grandfather Oakly. It was the first week in June before my uncle could gather courage to tell his father of his dream of love.

“They were standing together, in an alcove of the lofty wainscotted parlor, when my grandfather laid his hand on Allan’s shoulder with an unwonted display of affection. ‘It is twenty-two years ago to-day, my son, since your mother came into this house a bride. It is ten years ago to-day, since she was carried out of it a corpse, married to death. Never yet has my heart found room for another image! You are very like your mother, boy.’

“‘Then *you*, sir, were twenty years old when you married. *I*

am twenty now. May I go forth, and bring you a daughter to love, who will kneel with me at your feet for your blessing?’

“‘You would wed, my son? On whom has your choice fallen?’

“‘On Maud Vincent, my father, — the schoolmaster’s daughter!’

“I have been told the outbreaks of my grandfather’s passion were terrible to see; but he mastered himself, at last, sufficiently to say, in a tone of suppressed rage, ‘Allan Oakly, marry Maud Vincent, if you will; but from that hour you are no son of mine; and with my dying breath I will curse you — *curse you* — CURSE YOU!’

“Terror-stricken, my uncle glided from the room, with a blight resting on his whole future. He loved Maud Vincent. For her sake he could have braved death in its wildest forms. He could have defied pain, or want, or ruin; but not, O, not a *father’s curse!* It wanted two weeks still to the day appointed for the marriage. Already Maud’s simple *trousseau* was completed, and her lover had shared in her childish joy, when she tried on her bridal dress of snowy muslin, looped up with orange-flowers; and *he* made the discovery that she had never before looked half so beautiful. How could he crush this innocent happiness, and lay upon her pure young soul the blight which was consuming his own? He resolved to wait until the last moment.

“The night of the sixteenth of June was passed by him in sleepless agony. He attempted to write to his betrothed, but many times he snatched up the sheet and tore it in fragments. At last he succeeded in producing a scrawl, blotted, and almost

illegible with tears, which he commissioned my father to deliver to her, at the hour appointed for the nuptials. It was day-light when he completed it, and in five minutes he took the early morning stage for the capital.

“At ten o'clock that day, my father entered the schoolmaster's cottage. He was but fifteen then, and his boyish heart was deeply moved. Tears chased each other down his pale cheeks, and his limbs trembled so violently he could hardly enter the parlor. Maud was already attired for her bridal. Her golden curls were crowned with a wreath of orange-flowers, and her dimpled neck and arms looked fairer than ever, through the fleecy folds of her snowy robe. She looked up with a glad, joyous smile, as my father entered; and then, seeing him, she cried, ‘O, it is you, good Bertie! Welcome, — but where is Allan?’

“‘He could not come yet,’ said my father, in a choking voice, ‘but he bade me give you this,’ and he put the letter in her hand. The blue eyes of the girl grew larger and larger, as she read. It ran thus :

“‘Heaven forgive and pity me, life of my life, that I should be writing you, the night before our bridal, only to say farewell. Our bridal; yes, it shall be so. To-morrow my soul shall marry your soul, though I am far away. I have been mad, for two weeks past, Maud! The ashes of the bottomless pit have been upon my head, and its hot breath has scorched my cheek. I would not tell you, my beloved, because I wished not to drag you down with me to perdition. O, Maud, my darling! Maud, my beloved! Can it be, I never more must draw your head

to my heart—never more must look into your blue eyes, or watch the blushes stealing over your cheek? But I am raving.

“Two weeks ago, Maud, I told my father of our love, and, with a terrible oath, he vowed that he would curse me with his latest breath, if I made you my bride. I dare not oppose myself to his wishes. God knows I would have braved for you all that man could brave of fate, or suffering; but my father’s curse, it is too horrible. You may think me selfish, darling, that I have fled, and left you to bear this all alone; but, O, I could not look into your sweet face, and know I must not call you mine. I could not see your agony. It would unman me. Beside, my heart tells me you will bear it better if I am far away.

“I go to France, dear one. Life is held there now at the point of the bayonet, and I long to die. And yet, Maud, I have one hope. All things earthly pass away, and so may the opposition to our wishes. It will not be in weeks, or months; perhaps not in long years. I dare not ask you to wait for me, to be true to me; but, O, Maud, life of my life, I can never love another. I shall be true, and *if* you should be?—O, my angel, at the very thought, heaven opens before me. I must not write more. God in heaven bless you! O, angel Maud, follow me with prayers, or I shall be a lost and ruined man. Let me think Maud prays for me, Maud waits for me, and it will be my salvation. Bless you—bless you—bride of my heart—wife of my soul! Blessed be thou, as I am wretched.

“Your

ALLAN.’

“All the time the girl read, her blue eyes had kept growing larger and larger, and when she had finished she calmly folded the letter and left the room. My father had expected she would be stunned by the blow, or, at least, that she would weep or faint; but she did neither. She was so very calm that it frightened him, and he stole from the house.

“After that Maud came among the villagers as before. She taught her own little class at day-school, and Sunday-school; and there was no change, except that her eyes looked larger and sadder, and her fair cheek grew thinner and paler, every day. If any questioned her concerning her lover, ‘He has gone to France,’ she would answer, ‘and will return again, after a time.’

“And so three years passed on. Each month there came a letter for Maud, full of the most earnest protestations of unchanging love, and imploring her to write him, if it were but one word. Not one of these ever reached the sweet girl for whom it was intended. My grandfather had control over the post-office, as over most other things in that region. The letters were given into his hands, and he read them, and locked them in his desk. And still, in spite of all, he dearly loved his first-born son Allan; and when he saw the clinging, passionate tenderness with which his thoughts still turned to his early love, he sat down and wrote him that Maud had forgotten him — that Maud was wedded.

“Other years passed — sad, weary years to Allan Oakly — in which he wrote no more letters to the schoolmaster’s daughter. Nor did he ever mention her name in his letters to my father. If he had, the mystery might, perhaps, have been explained,

and two lives made happier. But, I don't know — God orders all things, and there are some souls that grow meet for heaven through much tribulation.

“Almost ten years had past since my uncle left his home, when my grandfather received a letter announcing his return. He would bring his bride with him, he said; and he was coming, perhaps, to die. He had never forgotten Maud Vincent, — never loved another as he had loved her; but he had been very ill, very miserable, and Alice Graves had been his gentle nurse. She was a fair, high-born English girl, and when he found that she loved him he had given her his hand; but his malady was of the soul, and no care or nursing could cure it.

“Then it was that my grandfather, terrified at the result of his own schemes, called my father to his side, and told him that by some means Allan had supposed Maud to be married, and so had united himself to another; and he bound my father, by a solemn promise, not to undeeive him, lest the shock should prove fatal. All these years Maud had lived on, in her still, quiet beauty, growing every year paler, and more spiritual. But a sweet hope lay warm, living and earnest, in her heart; the hope, the faith, that, some day in the far future, her betrothed would return, and they should be reunited.

“There were costly preparations made at Oakly Hall for the reception of the heir and his bride. The spacious parlors were refitted, a conservatory thrown open, and a new room, added to the west wing of the building, was arranged as a *boudoir* for the Lady Alice. It was a pleasant afternoon in early May, when a travelling-carriage bowled slowly up the gravelled walk, and my Uncle Allan, descending from it, extended his hand to a fair

and gentle lady. You could have seen, as they ascended the steps, however, that he leaned on her frail form for support. This return to Oakly, a spot haunted by so many memories, proved a shock too severe for his already enfeebled constitution, and one from which he never recovered.

“ He had been home a month already, and had not yet left the house, when one evening he lay, a little before sunset, on a lounge by the window of his wife’s *boudoir*. My grandfather stood near him, and the Lady Alice sat on a low stool by his side. ‘Father,’ he said, in a husky voice, ‘where is Maud? I must see her before I die. Dear Maud! Alice always knew how well I loved the Maud of my memory, the Maud of my worship, — did you not, sweet Alice? Father, I have not long to live, and I must see Maud before I die. I gave her up at your request, and now you must bring her here at mine.’

Slowly the old man left the room, and in a few minutes more Maud had been summoned, and arrived at the Hall. My grandfather met her as she entered, and said, in a husky whisper, ‘Maud Vincent, you have loved my son. He thinks you are married to another; do not deceive him, or his death will be upon your head!’

“ ‘I promise,’ answered Maud, firmly and gently, as she passed into the *boudoir*.

“ ‘O, Maud, Maud, star of my heart, beauty of my dreams!’ cried the sick man, raising himself from his pillow. ‘Father, Alice, you will go forth for a moment, and leave us alone.’

“ What passed at that interview no one ever knew. A half-hour afterwards, my grandfather reëntered the room. Maud had climbed upon the couch, and there, with her arms around him,

with his head resting at last on *her* bosom, lay my Uncle Allan, dead! A wild light burned in Maud Vincent's eyes; but she clasped her hands imploringly, and said, in a low, pleading whisper :

“ ‘For the love of Heaven, do not waken him, sir; he sleeps, at last. You know, sir, we are to be married, the seventeenth of June!’ Then, turning to the dead one on her breast, she brushed back the hair from his pale, high brow, and murmured, ‘Sleep, Allan; sleep, darling! Nobody shall harm thee—Lullaby!’

“ ‘Alas, alas! poor gentle Maud Vincent! Her long-tried heart had broke at last; she had gone mad. Long the Lady Alice sorrowed for her lord, but not as one without hope; for, two years after, she gave her hand to my father, and I, Nellie, am her child. My grandfather, in his latter years, was penitent, and grew meek and gentle as a child; but it is said remorse haunted and stung him terribly on his death-bed. Maud Vincent is nearly sixty years old now, but every seventeenth of June she fails not to robe herself in bridal attire, and come to her lover's tomb, to awaken him. Sometimes I have thought she was less crazed than we deemed her; and that the wakening for which she waited was to come after death, the new birth of heaven. But look, Nellie, there she is still!’

Kate paused from the recital, and, looking out through my tears, I could see the pale mourner, in her white robes, kneeling still, with her lips pressed to the cold marble; and once more she said, in the same trembling voice, so full of melancholy, “Come forth, O my beloved! Alas! thou wilt not. Have I, then, one year more to wait in care and sorrow? Alas, alas!”





POOR MAUD WAS DEAD.

Several years after, toward the close of a long letter from Kate, occurred this passage :

“ Poor Maud is gone at last, Nellie ! The manner of her death was, to say the least, very singular. She had seemed wilder than usual, for some days, and we had not allowed her to go anywhere without an attendant. It was the seventeenth of June, and in the morning her manner was very calm and gentle. Once more she robed herself in her bridal attire, and, shaking down her long silver tresses, soft and curly still, she bound them with a wreath of fresh and fragrant orange-flowers. ‘ We are to be married at ten,’ she said, smiling, as she left the house, ‘ and it is eight now !’

“ She went directly to the grave, and knelt there for nearly two hours, apparently absorbed in silent prayer. At last she said, with a wild cry of joy,

“ ‘ It is time — it is time ! Come forth, O beloved ! At last Thou comest — Thou, who art the resurrection, and the life ! Welcome — thrice welcome, for I have waited many years. Praise God, my beloved !’

“ And the frightened attendant avers that she saw an angel rise out of the grave, with wings of white. She hastened to the house ; I glanced at the clock, on the mantel ; it was five minutes after ten, and, when we reached the grave, POOR MAUD WAS DEAD !”

“THERE, NELL, THE HAY ’S IN.”

So it is! Ten thousand blessings on you, little, darling, rosy cousin Hal! You rode on the cart, did n't you, and helped, of course! What an achievement! I doubt greatly whether, if you should sit in the Presidential chair, some day, you 'd be half as elevated;—you would n't be so high up in the air, would you? Brave, nice little rider, the old-time memories sweep over my heart like a gale, when I look at you; for I am older than you are, and have ridden on many things, beside hay-carts!

What a beautiful simplicity there is about childhood, especially the childhood of such children as grow up among buds, and blossoms, and fresh air! Blessed be Heaven that I was a child once! That, even that, is something now,—to look back and remember that there was a time when I dared to be transparent; when my eyes mirrored my heart like wells; when I spoke as I felt, and feared nothing short of God and heaven!

Blessed be childhood, for its unworldliness, its living in the present, which is the nearest thing to living unto God! No questions then about fashion; no schemes or troubles; no brief, fitful dreams of fame-fires, which burn, for their fuel, the very heart whence they sprung.

It is joy enough then to take a breezy walk over the downs, to have a pocket-full of nuts or apples, or a ride on a hay-cart.

Why, O, why cannot this freshness be preserved, to make green our after life? It is a question that has haunted me for many a week, and I cannot answer it. It cannot be, surely, that our God-created hearts pass, of their own accord, out of these quiet, sunny fields of the child-life, into the world-paths, choked with sand and thorns, and oftentimes steep with hills!

It must be a kind of hereditary madness, so common that it has ceased to be fearful. We walk, ourselves, in a land of shadows; we stretch out our hands, and grasp unreal phantoms, calling themselves wealth, and pleasure, and fame; and we say their names over to our children, and teach them, too, to turn away from the tree of the true life, and stretch their dimpled fingers after these apples of Sodom.

The pain, the disappointment, the loss and anguish, are theirs; but the curse, alas for it! will it not fall on us? I have been forth into the world, and come back again weary; and now my heart is aching sore for the sunnier days, when I made parasols of hollyhocks, and tea-pots of poppy-pods, and, after the fashion of ladies on Fifth Avenue, kept my own carriage, which was — a hay-cart!

DELIA: A LAMENT.

RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED TO HON. C. F. CLEVELAND AND LADY

DIM, struggling sunbeams of the dawn
Keep with the clouds a funeral tryst ;
A long, blue line lies slant across
The whiteness of the morning's mist ;
With solemn monodies of birds
The air is tremulous the while,
As when, from hollow organ-pipes,
A moan floats through the old church-aisle !

And 'mid thick boughs of branching trees,
Where spring-buds cannot struggle through,
I tread beneath my listless feet
The crisp grass, bended o'er with dew.
A dirge, as of unnumbered bells,
Is ringing, painful, in my ears ;
Around my heart, in choking tide,
Surge sullen baptism-waves of tears.

What time the sweet spring-days grew long,
Beneath the last year's mellow rays,
Our fond hearts echoed back her song,
Our voices trembled to her praise.

When starlights from her meek brown eyes
Illumined all our spirit's night,
Our pains, like crowns of thorns, fell down,
And hopes sprang up from hopeless blight.

What time she braided up her hair
With summer buds and bands of flowers.
It was as if some saint had shed
Heaven's light on this dim world of ours ;
And, kneeling where her feet had trod,
We watched to see the glory break,
When angel fingers, at the dawn,
Heaven's portals opened for her sake !

She was too good, we said, and fair,
To dwell in this cold world of pain,
And yet, we never dared to think
Her own might beckon her again.
All the pale winter that is gone,
Our life knew neither shade nor fear ;
'T was bathed in love's serenest light,
From those brown eyes, so heavenly dear.

But, in the twilights of the spring,
The angels whispered to her soul ;
In sweet and pleasant symphony,
She heard heaven's tide of anthems roll ;
And, putting from her forehead pale
The scarcely faded bridal crown,
In the dim twilight of white death
The young day of her life went down.

And grief sits brooding in our hearts ;
For sweet spring time, and summer heat,
And autumn winds, that viewless tread
The hill-side with their homeless feet,
But breathe to us of sweet hopes changed,
Of fond hearts breaking, young life fled ;
And earth seems but a mighty grave,
Where lonesome voices wail the dead !

REVERIES.

A GIRL! Yes, young and pretty, with the life-blood fairly dancing in my veins, and heart and eyes all a-glow with hopes!

Hopes! and why not hopes, I pray? What if I be young, and weak, and a woman? Why not hope? Is there not enough within me to beautify my future? Am I not loved? Is not Ernest good and noble, and is not his fate mine?

Beloved! Yes, I am; and already into my soul steals some of the quiet holiness belonging to the tie of a betrothed wife. Yes, beloved! I am ambitious for myself no longer. Indeed, I doubt sometimes whether I have any individual existence.

My plans are all for him. What care I for fame now — for glory, save the glory of being his? But I would have men bow before him whom I delight to honor. I would have palms of victory and glory rustle over his noble brow, and shine myself in the lesser light reflected from his name. Ah, yes, I love and am loved! — O, Heaven, how fondly!

A BRIDE! What dreams, what visions, have already met their fulfilment! What other and still more glorious visions are stretching onward into futurity?

How strange it seems to hear them call me by his name!

With what a flutter of timidity and delight I trembled, when they called me so for the first time!

I am his now forever. I do not tremble; I am calm and glad, for I love him and he loves me. How pleasant it seems to have him take care of me! How kind and tender he is; how observant of my every wish! What a joy to feel that the arm on which I lean is my own forever; that not even time or death can take him from me, for our union shall be truer still, and more enduring, in the skies!

A WIFE! What has become of the wild gladness of my bridal days, the fairy visions of my girlhood? Ah me! they are all pressed down in graves, with the flowers growing over them.

My life now is different from anything I had dreamed, or hoped!

We are one too wholly to say "I love." We would as soon think of saying to each other, "I love myself," as to say those words so pleasant in the olden time, "I love you."

O, how the ties which bind our hearts have strengthened since then, till they have grown so firm and strong, no words can undo, no deeds can break them! O, none but a happy wife can realize the full beauty of that almost prophetic declaration, — "And they twain shall be one flesh." We are not one flesh only, but one soul! Our hearts thrill to the same hopes and dreams; — we do not talk to each other any more, we only think aloud. All that is Ernest's, his life, his hopes, his dreams, ay, and his very beauty, is in another and a dearer sense mine.

Truly, if ever hearts were wedded, with the Eternal for the priest, and angels for witnesses, ours are so wedded, and I am blest!

A MOTHER now! O, this young and beautiful part of myself, this sweet new life that is resting on my bosom! God be praised that he has given me work, — an angel to train for heaven. What a soul looks forth from those violet eyes! My child, my holy one, my God-given! I wonder if ever there was another baby like my baby! What eyes it has — its father's eyes; and the little hand that rests upon my bosom, — did ever another mother's heart thrill to touch, so soft, so fairy-like, so dear! What pretty little ways it has! How it winds its arms around my neck, and laughs till its cheeks dimple and flush like the hearts of the June roses!

But it has come into a weary world, my little pilgrim from the Eden-land. God help me to guard it from care and sorrow, and from sin! Stoop from thy heavenly throne, O Saviour of men, and hallow my baby with the baptism of thy divine love!

Gone to sleep now! It must be an enchanted sleep, my dearest one, for the smile brightens round thy rose-bud mouth, as if at pleasant dreams.

CHILDLESS! Alas for it! O, my beautiful one, how still thou liest! Scarcely does the summer wind lift thy fair curls, O, my own life!

Dearest half of my being, — baby that I have borne beneath my heart! How can I give thee up? O, my precious! I

shall hear thy voice in the long, blue summer, when the violets grow above thy head. I shall clasp my arms about thee in dreams, and wake to find them empty, with the moonbeams on my bosom, where the shadow of thy hair was wont to float.

Speak to me but once, my darling, and then I can say, God's will be done!

Kiss me but once — once more, ere they nail down thy coffin-lid! Cold and silent, still. O God, how can I bear this agony?

My child, my child! What have you gone to sleep for there in the sunshine?

You are not dead! no, indeed, you can't be! What a bitter mockery it was when they told me my beautiful baby was dead! Did I not know better? Dead, indeed, with that sweet smile on her lips!

But wake up, darling; you've slept long enough. Here's your little rattle, the pretty silver one that mother would n't let you play with. You shall have it now, little one! What! you don't wake — not when your mother kisses you? — Then you are dead, my precious!

O God! cannot I come too? I can hold her more gently than the angels, for is n't she *mine*?

They shall not put her in the ground! I will hold her on my bosom! The whole world is empty!

Forgive me, O Father, it is not empty! I can say "Thy will be done," for Ernest is by my side. He is holding me on his heart, — weeping with me, for me, — his tears are hot and burning, but they cool the fever of my soul. I can bear to have them put my baby in the ground now, for Ernest tells me she will be mine still in heaven. I can live, for his life would be

desolate without me. And yet, my precious child, my only one, thy mother loves thee. But I will not call thee back; I will not grieve that thy home is on thy Saviour's breast, and over thy pure heart grow sweet-breathed flowers, brightening in the shine and shower of the summer. Permitted to be the mother of an angel in heaven, I will not go mourning among the graves of earth.

WIDOWED! Dead! dead! Can it be,—strong, true heart? Is there no more a breast where I can weep, an arm to shelter me, a voice to call me darling? Dead! Then God be merciful, for all is gone! O, speak to me but once, only one little time, to say that you forgive me!

O, Ernest, did I not love you? What have I done, that you should go away and leave me here alone? Do you not feel me?

See, I am lying upon your breast! Awake! arise! What! cold and silent still, when such tears fall from my eyes!

Did you not promise to love me always?—and you are gone! What am I saying—forgive me!

See, I am kneeling to you, my own beloved! Look at me! Not one glance,—dead, dead!

You loved me once, I know you did. They cannot take away *that*, if they do put you down in the grave-yard.

How the clock ticks! How the carriages rattle! and I hear people laugh on the side-walk! Cruel! I will shriek it into them, so they will hear it forever, that fierce word—Dead! Kiss me. I never kissed those lips before that they did not thrill at my touch. Cold and stark!

The sun does n't shine any more. Ah, yes it does; it is mocking me.

The sun shines, and the birds sing. Birds that he used to feed. The world goes on as gay as ever. How I long to tear the mask off, and see if other hearts are never scorched, and seared, and branded with that wild word — Dead!

A PILGRIM! At last, O Father in heaven, I can say, "Thy will be done!"

Thou hast taken all, and given me a double portion in Thyself. I walk in the shadow of Thy Cross now, for my loves and hopes are in heaven.

Three winters the snow has woven shrouds over my baby's grave; three summers the flowers have blossomed there, and the stars smiled on them.

Twelve long and weary months I have walked alone to the grave-yard, where they wrote my husband's name on the marble!

He has slept well. At first, I used to clasp him to my heart, in feverish dreams. My head used to lie upon his bosom, and I would wake and weep that I was alone. But I am only on a journey.

I am contented, now that they have gone home before me — Ernest and little Carrie. I loved them, and I dare not weep when I think they are borne on angels' pinions through the gates over which I must climb in toil and sorrow.

It chokes my heart with tears, sometimes, when I see some happy mother lay her child's head on her breast, and watch the

light in its smiling eyes ; for I think of eyes that looked in other days into my own, and hair that streamed like moonlight over my bosom ; but I dash the tears away, for the angels are nursing Carrie for me in heaven, and by and by they will put her in my arms. Downward from the invisible country fall the sun-rays on those two dear graves, making a shining path of light, wherein one day my feet shall tread ; for, God be praised, I can go to them, though they can never come to me !

CHRISTIANA: OR, THE CHRISTMAS GIFT.

A GERMAN TALE.

“And Jesus called a little child unto Him, and set him in the midst of them,

“And said, Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

“*And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name, receiveth me!*”

HOLY SCRIPTURE.

It was the evening before Christmas. The Hartz Mountains were covered with snow, and the trees looked as beautiful, in their white drapery, as the choir of white-robed village maidens, that scatter flowers on a bridal morning. The moonlight fell in a flood of glory over all, smoothing away the roughnesses of the sleeping world, even as the roughnesses are smoothed away from our life-paths when we look at them in the clear light of eternity.

Everything wore a holy peace in the home of Gottlieb Schwiden, the forester. Gottlieb had been out all day in the forest, gathering up boughs, and piling wood into fagots. He had worked later than usual, for it was the day before Christmas, and his wife had got all things ready for his return. Her two eldest boys, Carl and Johan, had gone out with their father to help in the fagot-binding. Marie, a quiet, womanly girl of

twelve, had been assisting her mother, and now sat down by the window to watch for her father's return ; while the other children, Maud and Katrine, and even the little Heinrich in his cradle, were still and quiet in the hush of the Christmas evening.

The fire burned brightly on the broad hearth, and the reflection of its rays made the little looking-glass opposite flash like a great diamond, from out its frame of green twigs and holly-berries. In one corner, Gertrude Schwiden had spread her husband's supper-table. It was a round table of smooth pine-boards, but on it lay a cloth white as the snow on the top of the Hartz Mountains, and the supper of hot oat-meal cakes and honey, and goats' milk, was good and plentiful.

Gertrude, herself, was a kind, motherly woman of forty, still handsome, with just the good-humored, loving face a man likes to find smiling on him when he comes home at night.

Gertrude's father and mother were poor cottagers, and she had not many folds of linen to her dowry ; but Gottlieb Schwiden, though he never met her at fairs, or market-days, had seen her come to church on the Sabbath, with her simple straw bonnet, and her old grandmother leaning upon her arm ; and so he said, "She who makes so good a daughter will certainly prove a good wife." And he had taken the portionless Gertrude with a glad heart to his cottage in the forest.

Gottlieb was considered a "well-to-do" young man, as poor folks reckon such things. He owned his snug little cottage on the borders of the forest, and was a forester, as his father had been before him, for the Dukes of Saxe-Coburg. But yet, during the twenty years of his married life, he had only been able,

by close toil, to hold his own, and care for the wants of his increasing family. But he had a portion better than riches, for he was pious and contented; and one wiser than you, or I, or Gottlieb Schwiden, has said, "Godliness with contentment is great gain."

His wife had been all to him that he hoped—the cheerful fellow-worker, the sympathizing friend, the godly mother of his children. And now, this Christmas evening, she had swept up her little room, and garnished it with evergreens, and, taking the little Heinrich from his cradle, she sat down before the fire with a quiet smile, to await her husband's return.

At last there were quick steps outside, and in rushed the two boys, Carl and Johan, with their rosy cheeks, and eyes sparkling with exercise and good-humor.

"Hurra, mother, for Christmas! nothing to do to-morrow; but we are just as hungry as bears—can't we have supper?"

"Yes, boys, presently; but where is your father?"

"O, he won't be home, these two hours. One of the big black oaks has blown down, and he staid to cut it up and bind it. You know the moon shines so, it is as light as day."

"Well, sit down, then, and eat your supper; the oat-cakes are beginning to get cold, and I'll make some new ones, and have them hot for your father."

It was nine o'clock before Gottlieb Schwiden lifted the latch of the little cottage. When at last he entered, he bore with him a large-sized wicker basket, with a card attached to the cover, on which was printed, in good black ink,

"A Christmas Gift for Gottlieb Schwiden and his wife Gertrude."

“Well, wife, what can this be?” cried the forester, as he set the basket down upon the table. “Get your shears, and just cut these cords, and we’ll see in a trice.”

Gertrude quickly cut the cords, and then they lifted the cover from the basket, and found—what do you guess, wise old people that are reading?—and what do you guess, dear little children? It was a baby,—not a common little baby, but one fair, and sweet, and beautiful, as a fairy-baby, or a snow-child.

It was sound asleep when they opened the basket, but in a moment the joyful cries of the children awoke it, and, with a smile, it opened wide its great blue eyes. O, such a beautiful child as it was!

“Not so pretty as our baby,” I hear one and another of you say, little boy and girl readers! May be you would n’t think so, for you love your own baby best; but forget him just now, and imagine yourself a little German child, with no playthings at all, in a small house in the forest; and suppose, on a Christmas evening, some one should send you a real live little baby, with nose and eyes and mouth just like other children, only ten times fairer and sweeter than any of them. I guess you would say it was a beauty; or, if you would n’t, the little German children in the forest did, and that’s just as well for my story.

The little one had great, fearless blue eyes, clear as the blue sky on a summer evening, when the air-fairies have stolen away all the clouds to make castles of; then she had such sunny curls—you would have thought, surely, some fairy had been bribing the big giant who tends the fires of the sun, and had stolen away some of his sunbeams to bind the baby’s forehead.

I don’t know as you would have seen anything uncommon

about the baby's toes and fingers, and the little nose and lips, but Maud and Katrine and Marie thought them the most remarkable toes and fingers that ever were seen. But one thing you would have thought strange — the baby bore all this examination patiently, turning her great smiling eyes from one to another, and "never cried a word;" while, you know, in church last Sunday, your baby, if she didn't cry words, cried a great many other things that were worse than words.

But, while we have been talking, they have left the baby in the basket; and now, Gertrude, who has quietly warmed some goat's milk, takes it out, and gives it some supper.

All this time Gottlieb had stood silent, with a puzzled face, half smiling, now and then, at the delight of the children. At last he came and sat down by his wife, as, with her loving, motherly eyes, full of quiet tears, she was giving the stranger its cup of milk.

"Pretty little thing, isn't she, Gertrude?" he said, at length. "I must carry her off to Dame Purtzell's in the morning. She takes care of the poor, you know. I declare I hate to take it away, it's so pretty."

"Surely, Gottlieb," said the wife, turning away her meek eyes, "you don't mean to give away our Christmas present to any one else? We don't know what a blessing may have been sent with the gentle, fearless little thing. You will let me keep her, won't you?"

"But, Gertrude, we have hardly enough for these," and he turned his fatherly eye on his own seven children; "how can we get bread enough for another?"

"Surely, my husband," said Gertrude, meekly, "the Lord

will provide. Has He not said, 'Whoso shall receive one such little child in my name, receiveth me'? He provides for the sparrows, and He will provide for us, His children, and those He has given us."

"You are right, as you always are, my wife Gertrude; you shall have the child;" and Gottlieb Schwiden arose, and went to the supper-table.

An hour later, and the children had all gone to bed, save Heinrich, who was sleeping in his cradle, and the little stranger lying in Gertrude's arms. The wife sat thoughtfully beside her husband, and the fire-light shone flickering over her, and the fair child in her arms, making a beautiful picture, that some artist might have wrought out on the canvas, and won himself a name. But no artist was there to see it; there was only Gottlieb, and he sat gazing thoughtfully into the fire.

"Wife," said he, at last, "what will you name your Christmas gift? We do not know that she has ever been baptized, and we will take her to the church to-morrow, and have her christened."

"I have been thinking of that, Gottlieb, and I thought, as she was given to us as a Christmas gift, like a Christ-child, we would call her *Christiana*."

"Well, Gertrude, she is yours; you can name her what you will. She's a fair, sweet little thing, and looks pure enough for an angel, as she lies there upon your lap. You know the good book says some have entertained angels unawares."

Merrily rang all the church-bells, far and near, on the bright Christmas morning.

Gayly flashed the snow-crested tops of the Hartz Mountains, and the tall trees of the forest spread out their long, white-robed arms, like so many bishops, all saying a benediction. The breakfast-table had been cleared away in the little cottage of Gottlieb Schwiden, the mother had hung the Christmas turkey up to roast, and, leaving Marie at home to watch the turkey and the children, she was making ready to go to church with her husband, her two oldest boys, her daughter Maud, and the little Christmas child.

The comfortable sled, with its wolf-skins and bear-skins, stood at the door, with the same strong donkey fastened to it which was Gottlieb's patient companion in all his journeys through the forest. The wife looked very fair to her husband's eyes, in her quiet, holy, matronly beauty, as she stood there before him in her plain, gray woollen dress, and her Sunday cloak and hood. But fairer still, and far more beautiful, was the little one she held in her arms.

It wore the same dress it had on when they found it; for, said Gertrude, "I will give it to God in the same garments in which he gave it to me."

It was a delicate little robe of richly-wrought muslin, finer and softer than anything that had ever before been seen inside the forester's cottage. Outside this was many a wrapping of soft, warm flannel, and on her golden curls was placed a little cap, with its delicate frill of lace, just shading the fair, spiritual face. "Dear child!" whispered Gertrude, as she clasped it to her bosom. She took her seat in the sled beside her husband, and then, turning to Gottlieb, remarked —

"I hope the little one won't cry very much. Our other children

have been pretty quiet at their christenings ; but you know no child takes to the water naturally."

"Are there any children to be baptized this morning?" asked the old pastor, standing up in his place before he began the services.

Gottlieb Schwiden arose, and walked to the altar. "I have brought one," he answered.

The old man smiled, as he said, "Another lamb for the church of Christ? God hath blessed thee very abundantly, my son."

"Yes, my father, and this one is God-given," answered the forester ; and, standing up there before the congregation, he told the story of his little foundling, and begged that thanks might be returned in his name to the good God who had sent the Christmas gift.

"Let the child be presented for baptism," said the pastor at the close of the lessons ; and Gottlieb Schwiden stepped forward to the altar, with Gertrude, his wife. At the same moment, into the church came a lady very bright and beautiful. Her face was pure as the angel faces we see in the clouds at sunset, and her rich robes swept the rush-matting of the long aisle. "I am the child's godmother," she said to Gertrude, in a low and gentle tone, approaching the altar. "You will never see me again till the little one shall need me ; but my influence will be around her, and I shall be powerful to protect her, in more ways than you dream of now. Will you give her to me?"

For a moment Gertrude hesitated. She thought of spirits, and genii, and the beautiful sisters of the Hartz Mountains, and she turned once more an earnest, curious look upon the stranger.

The child looked at her, too, with its great blue eyes, and,

stretching toward her its dimpled arms, a strange, sweet smile broke over its baby face; and Gertrude said, "The child is wiser than I, for she has been a shorter time out of heaven." Then turning, she put the babe in the strange lady's arms, and made a sign to the pastor to proceed.

In a few moments the sacred rite was over. All this time, the same sweet smile was on the fair child's face, and just parted her rose-bud lips. Not until the strange lady gave her back to Gertrude's arms did it fade away; then, for a moment, the little Christiana closed her eyes in a kind of patient sorrow; and at length, as if weary, laid her head down upon her foster-mother's breast.

The turkey was indeed nicely done, and the mother found the table spread, and the children neatly dressed for their Christmas supper.

When it was over, the father piled fresh Yule logs on the fire, and, taking his baby Heinrich on his knee, sat down before it; and the mother drew up her low seat in the midst of her children, with the little Christiana lying upon her lap.

Sitting there, as the night-shadows lengthened, she told of that other Christmas, centuries ago, when the divine Christ-child had been born in the lowly manger at Bethlehem.

"And was the great God really a weeny, little baby, like this new sister Christiana?" asked the little Maud, lifting unconsciously her large, thoughtful eyes.

"Yes, dear," answered the mother reverently. "Just such a

little baby God the Son became for our sakes, that He might grow up among men, and as man be tempted."

"And could n't He stir, any more than Christie, — nor walk, nor talk, nor creep, nor anything?"

"No, my darlings; He became a little, weak infant, and, like other babies, had to be nursed and tended."

"I've been thinking, mother," said Marie, very thoughtfully, 'that when the God-child was born there, it was as if the whole world had had a glorious Christmas present; for you say, mother, He came to die for all men.'

"Yes, dear child, it was indeed the world's Christmas present; but, even as little Christie, last night, would have done us no good, but rather been a condemnation to us, if we had not brought her into the house and accepted her, so the divine gift of a Saviour will do us no good, if we do not accept him, and bring him into the house of our hearts."

The children listened to their mother in silent earnestness; and later still, when she told them of the great Christmas fires in lordly castles, and the Christmas trees, where the rich gifts hang like fruit, with glistening eyes they stole softly up, on tiptoe, to the little one lying there, in the fire-shine, on their mother's lap, and kissed her, with hearts thankful for the richer Christmas gift that had been theirs.

Years passed away. The Hartz Mountains rose solemnly, as of old; the great trees in the forest seemed unchanged, as the mosses grew gray upon their trunks in summer, or the snows of winter dressed them in fantastic winding-sheets. But there had been

changes in the house of Gottlieb Schwiden. The forester's form was becoming slightly bowed, and his step getting a little slower, while many a thread of silver was braided in his wife's fair hair. Carl and Johan had built their houses near at hand, and brought home quiet, sensible German girls, for their wives. A handsome young forester, too, came often to the house, on Sundays and holidays; and the mother sighed as her glance rested on Marie's quiet little figure, and thought how soon it must go forth to gladden another home.

Christiana, too, had grown up along with the other children, and every day she seemed more and more worthy of her name. Many a traveller along the forest road would pause to look upon the fair, spiritual face, with its large blue eyes; and many a shining silver piece found its way, through her little fingers, into the coffers of the good man Gottlieb Schwiden.

There was a deserted wayside chapel near at hand, almost in ruins; but there hung a picture of the Virgin, untouched by the wasting hand of time, for it was a glorious old masterpiece, and no one saw it but to wonder how it had chanced to hang in such a shrine. This was the little Christiana's favorite resort. Gertrude had many times told her the story of her christening, and always added that the sweet face of her unknown god-mother was as like to the picture in the ruined chapel as if the Virgin had stepped out of her frame to come to the christening.

Therefore the fair child loved the sweet face of the Virgin, and studied it until it looked forth at her from every cloud, and smiled up at her from each stream in the forest. And, strange to say, people said the child's own face grew like to the blessed Virgin's, as if features could take coloring from thought. And

it was true,—so you may remember this, dear children,—if you think of God, and heaven, and angels, and all things good and pure, your faces will grow pure and sweet also, like the disciple whom Jesus loved; but always a wicked heart looks out of wicked eyes.

Well, as I was saying, the sweet child Christiana grew every day fairer and purer; and, at thirteen years old, her beauty was famed in all the country round. One day, in the sunny German summer, a young artist appeared at the forester's cottage. Whether he had heard of Christiana's beauty, and wished to paint her, or whether, as he said, he came only to see the wayside Virgin, I do not know; but certain it is he staid six weeks at the cottage, and painted, not the Virgin, but Christiana; and these six weeks seemed the happiest of the fair child's life.

They wandered together to many a sunny nook in the dim forest, and sat beside the deep streams, where the water-spirits combed out their long hair, and bound it up with lotus-flowers; singing strangely sweet German melodies, the while! Then they strayed into the sunny glades, where the strawberries blushed, and the grapes grew purple in the long, blue summer; and the artist opened another leaf of the great world, for the child's large blue eyes to read.

He told her of distant cities, where the ladies' hair was braided up with jewels, and their robes were wrought with gold; where silk rustled, and plumes nodded, through the long halls hung with pictures, and flashing with mirrors; and the girl listened with a pleased, half-doubtful wonder, opening wider, the while, those large blue eyes.

But she loved best to learn of him the pleasant lore of the

fairy-land, to call the fairy people by their names, and hold her breath as she thought of tall forms stealing over the Hartz Mountains, and through the lonesome passes of the forest. To the artist she seemed but a child; fair and gentle, indeed, but a child still.

Her foster-sister Maud was, if the thing be possible, almost as beautiful as herself; but it was a very different style of beauty. While Christiana might have claimed kindred with the angels,—for, looking in her face, you would have dreamed some band of seraphs had strayed earthward, and left one of their number behind, by a mistake,—Maud's beauty was essentially earthly.

Well had the forester been rewarded for his care of his Christmas gift, by the influence she exerted on his other daughters.

It was impossible to be rude, or harsh, in the pure, sweet presence of the Christmas-child; and so Maud and Katrine had grown up to be calm, graceful girls, with much of Christiana's poet-temperament blending with their German common sense.

Maud had still the dark, thoughtful eyes of her childhood, large and bright, and yet full of shadows among their brightness; but her strong physical organization had imparted to them an unflinching cheerfulness, which sometimes deepened into mirth. Her figure was full, almost voluptuous, in its outline; while Christiana's had the pliant, breezy gracefulness of the drooping willow.

Five years Christiana's senior, she had already ripened into the beautiful woman of eighteen, and on her the young artist, Ernest Heine, looked with eyes of love.

True, he saw the sweet Christmas-child was the one who truly appreciated his genius; who shared his rapture as the sun went down behind the mountains, flinging back the robe of his glory

upon their lofty tops ; and when he looked on her, he loved her as he might have loved the muse of his art, clothed in mortality ; but of such love as man gives woman he never thought.

Upon Maud he looked as a beautiful flower, from whose petals no other touch had ever rifled the sweetness, and he longed to wear her in his bosom ; nor did he leave the forest until he had won Gottlieb's consent to call her his, and claim her, when two more years had silvered the larches, and left their tribute of moss on the gnarled trunks of the oaks.

And Maud loved him as such girls can love, with a love that deepened the rose on her cheek, and the light in her eye ; but yet, if Ernest Heine had come no more to the cottage, her heart would not have broken, or her step grown heavy, and by and by, like her sister, she would have gone, contented and happy, to be the mistress of some other home. The artist left, and, as the spirit of the Summer clasped hands with Autumn, and walked backward over her fair domain, the slight figure of the Christmas-child grew thinner, and slighter, until she seemed more than ever akin to the angels.

That winter there came a messenger to the forest. The emperor had heard of the fame of the wayside Madonna, and sent for it to adorn a new chapel, in process of erection in the imperial grounds. It was a sore grief to Christiana ; but, after a while, the old smile came back to her eyes, as she playfully told her mother she was richer than the emperor, for he could only see the Madonna in the chapel, while she could see her smile from every cloud, and look out of every stream.

But another grief came to the family at the cottage. Gottlieb was out one day in the forest, when there came up a sudden

storm ; and one of the huge black oaks, torn up by its roots, was hurried along for several rods, and, reaching him in its path, hurled him to the ground, and, falling upon one of his legs, crushed it to fragments.

Fortunately, his two sons being at no great distance, his cries speedily summoned them to his aid, and he was borne home. He recovered his wonted health, indeed, but it was pitiful to see the bold forester of other days plodding round with his staff and his wooden leg.

It was but a few weeks after this when news came that the emperor's new chapel had taken fire, and, together with the way-side Madonna, been burned to the ground. With this news came a proclamation that, for the best Madonna which should be painted in his own dominions, the emperor had offered so large a sum of money that it would make the successful artist independent for life. It was now nearly spring, and the decision on the merits of the different pictures was fixed for two years from the following summer.

Christiana listened to all this, thoughtfully at first, and, by and by, with a new light stealing into her deep eyes ; and when the evening shadows gathered round the quiet hearth, she came, and, kneeling at her parents' feet, prayed that she might go forth from the forest. She spoke of the prize that had been offered, and told how she had heard of a school for artists, where every year three poor persons were freely admitted.

"Let me go, dear parents," she concluded ; "I will study as no one else can study, and I will win the prize."

There was I know not what of inspiration in her uplifted face, the clear, spiritual brow, and the earnest eyes. The husband

and wife looked on her silently. In Gertrude's motherly eyes the great tears gathered; and at last she said, with a trembling voice,

"Gottlieb, my husband, our Christmas-child has always been a blessing to us, — when did we know her judgment to guide her wrong? It is the voice of her destiny calling to her; we must let her go forth."

And her husband said, "Yes, Christiana, — God-given, — go where thy heart tells thee; and may God be good to thee, as thou hast been good to us, all the days of thy life!" and he crossed his hands in blessing upon her bowed head.

Then the young girl rose up, and stole away in the twilight to her own little room; and, as she glanced on her way at the scantily-spread table in the corner, tears almost choked the voice which whispered, "There will be one mouth less to feed!"

It was a week before the exhibition of the prize-pictures; and Christiana sat alone in her studio, giving the last touches to a beautiful Madonna. Wearily had the girl-artist toiled and studied, and many a time had her lamp grown dim, in the gray light of morning, as she worked alone at the beloved picture. She had completed it, at length, and she threw herself upon her knees, with tears of thankfulness raining from her eyes.

Another week, and a breathless crowd were awaiting the imperial decision in the hall of exhibition. There were jewelled countesses and sabred knights; and there, in the brilliant light, hung the seventy prize-pictures. Many times had the

emperor walked thoughtfully up and down the hall, his eyes kindling before paintings, almost all of them masterpieces of art.

At last he slowly paused, and, indicating with his sceptre the chosen picture, he exclaimed,

“This alone is worthy to fill the niche in the new chapel ; this alone the exact counterpart of the lost Madonna. Let the artist come forward !”

There was a moment's breathless silence ; — then a faint rustling at the other end of the hall, and down through the midst came a white-robed figure. At first, many crossed themselves and bowed their heads, as if they had seen an angel, and all eyes turned upon her with a strange surprise. She was a young girl, with a face as pale and fair as her snowy robe. Her long, golden curls fell about her, as she tripped onward like a spirit, and stood, at last, with bowed head, before the emperor.

Tears dimmed even his proud eyes for a moment, as he gazed on the humble, silent, graceful child before him, and then said, with father-like pity, “God grant you may not have wrought your life into this picture, my sweet child !” and then he placed a crown of silver myrtle-leaves upon her forehead, and in her hand the well-earned reward.

That night another form stood beside Christiana in her little study, and the voice of Ernest Heine pleaded wildly with her for her love.

“I never loved Maud,” he concluded ; “I paid her beauty homage, and I thought of you as a mere child. I have watched you since then, Christie, many an hour, and a love for

you has grown into my soul, so wild, so strong, I think it will kill me or drive me mad to see you another's. Christie, pure, beautiful child-angel, will you answer me?"

Drawing her hand firmly, but very gently, from the clasp which held it, the young girl answered :

"Gottlieb Schwiden and his wife saved me from death ; — they have brought me up and loved me as their own, and shall I cause their child to suffer ? No, no, Ernest Heine, look not at me so beseechingly ! I am no viper to sting the breast which warmed me ; — as God hears me, I will never be your wife. But you have been much to me. You first taught me how to love my art, and I will never pain you, if it would be pain to see me another's. I will be my art's bride now, and by and by the bride of death. No, no, Ernest, do not talk to me any more ; go now, — next time we meet, brother Ernest, I will be bridesmaid at Maud's wedding."

The young man saw it was hopeless to say more, and slowly and sorrowfully he went out. Then, indeed, came for Christiana an hour of most bitter agony, a trial than which death had scarcely been more terrible. Kneeling there, with bowed head and clasped hands, she could find no voice to pray ; but the very attitude seemed to carry consolation with it, and the triumphant artist knelt there alone for hours in that humble room, wrestling with the tide-waves of a crushing and most mighty sorrow. She had put away from her, with her own hands, a cup of hope beaded to the brim with bubbling drops of joy. She had sent one forth in anguish who was dearer to her than life ; and along her own track had withered all the roses, and left nothing for her clinging hands but thorns. But she had done right ; — out

of the depths she could lay hold of the consolations our God has promised to those who fear Him, and by and by her soul grew strong.

Two days after, she alighted from a travelling-carriage at a little distance from the forest-cottage. She wished to gaze unseen upon those she loved ; and she stole softly in at the back door. The first tones of Gottlieb's voice arrested her, they were so strangely sad.

"It's all over, wife," he said ; "we must go to-morrow out from the forest-cottage, and with no longer a roof to cover us. I cannot stay, except I pay five hundred thalers, — I, who could not raise as many hunderts !"

"I have been young, and now am old," said his wife, solemnly, "yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."

A moment, and Christiana was kneeling at their feet, and pouring many times five hundred thalers into the mother's lap !

Six weeks later, and there was a bridal at the cottage, for Maud was wedded to her artist-lover ; and no one noted that the bridesmaid's cheeks were paler than the snow-drops in her hair.

Many years later still, when title-deeds of the Duchy of Saxe-Coburg came to Christiana, she learned the name of the proud and beautiful lady, who, by an ill-starred marriage, had become her mother, and afterwards her godmother.

But she sent the empty honors back, and staid in her own home to cheer the old age of her foster-parents ; and, when at

last they were gathered to their fathers, she held in hers their trembling fingers as they passed through the valley and shadow of death ; and, bending down to catch the last words faltering on Gertrude's lips, she thanked God, for the dying woman whispered, "*Whoso receiveth one such little child in my name, receiveth me !*"

9*

THE VOICE OF THE WIND.

THE voice of the wind seems wailing,
But it breathes no wail to me ;
'T is only a tone and a message
From one lying under the sea.

“ Hath the storm-wind a voice, dear mother ?
And what does it seem to say,
When it comes to the window at night-fall,
Or lifts up the latch in its play ? ”

“ Come hither, my little daughter,
And kneel in the red fire-light,
And put back the curls from thy forehead,
And lift up thine eyes so bright.”

“ Why trembles the hand, dear mother,
You 're laying upon my hair ?
And why do you droop your eyelids,
So heavy with tears or care ? ”

“ I think of a grave, my daughter,
Where the storm-winds sing their hymn,
And a shroud of pearl and coral,
And mine eyes with tears are dim.

- “ There are lids like thine, my daughter,
Closed under the salt sea’s flow,
And a voice that I love is blending
With the winds, in a murmur low.
- “ A stately ship, one morning,
Went forth on the smiling main,
But she never sent back any message,
And she never came again,
- “ Till a night, when the storm-winds, blowing,
Stole into my lonely room,
And told me a tale in the darkness,
And whispered my name in the gloom.
- “ Then I knew that the winds had laid him
Where the sky is blue above,
And the South Sea lifts his tresses,
Like the hand of one we love !
- “ And the wind and the storm, my daughter,
They make my heart rejoice,
For ever I catch the echoes
Of a well-remembered voice !
- “ Thou art asleep now, little daughter,
And thy head is upon my knee,
But the wind wails on in the darkness,
In its flight from the desolate sea ;
- “ And the hopes of my youth are shrouded
With the days that once have been,
And I heed not the rain that falls without
For the tears that fall within.”

POOR AND FRIENDLESS.

GATHER up your dress! Closer! There, that is right. She cannot hit so much as the hem of your robe, now,—the little pauper!

How her thin frock clings to her shivering limbs! She has bare feet, too; and the tangled elf-locks are peeping from beneath the tattered hood.

What a sight she is, to be sure! You wonder poor people will let their children go out in the street looking so indecently. Hush! she is speaking to you: "Please, ma'am, for the love of Heaven, give me a little bread for my poor old grandmother!"

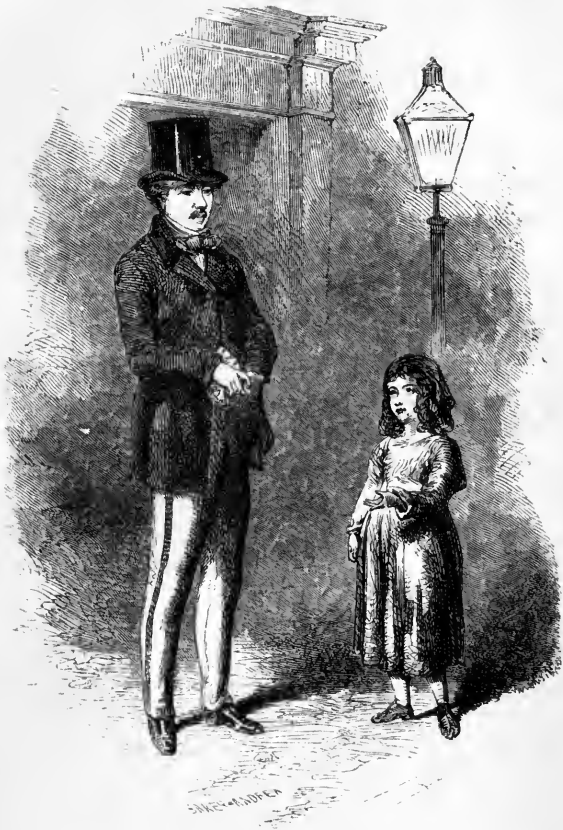
O, you must preserve your dignity, young lady! It will never do to be accosted by such persons in the street.

Tell her you are Col. Lofton's daughter; she must know you have no time to spend with idle, worthless beggars. That's right! She knows who you are now! You have preserved your dignity admirably; no fear of her annoying you again.

There she goes, homeward. Now you notice it, she does walk very gracefully. Those chilled limbs, which her poor robe reveals so plainly, are chiselled like a model from the sculptor.

Those eyes, too, that she raised to your face, filled with the mournful agony which we read sits in the fixed, settled gaze of the drowning, agony that only comes to us when the life-waves have surged away our last hope,—those dark, despair-





THE FIRST KIND WORD.

ing eyes wear a strange, weird beauty. The pale face is one that might have broken the heart of Paris, — but you said well, she is a beggar! Poor in all things, save this ill-fated beauty, which is a double woe to its possessor!

On she goes, down close, dirty streets, and now up, up, many a flight of steps in that rickety old house.

Do you hear that sharp voice asking, “Hey, child, what you got?” and the answer, — the fierce blows, and the low wail.

What wonder that she rushes down, down, and goes out weeping into the cold, miserable streets? And now, for the first time, she hears sweet words of kindness!

He is very handsome, that young gentleman who has paused to speak to her. True, there is an expression of dissolute selfishness around the ripe and well-cut lips; but the girl heeds it not. They utter the first words of kindness she has heard in a lifetime.

She was born in a fierce, dry storm. There was a high wind, and dark clouds, and moans and sighings in the air; but no gentle, pitying rain, falling like the quiet drops of a human sorrow.

Wilder, wilder blew the gale, when the little pauper opened her eyes on life; and they carried her dead mother out, and buried her where the spot is fenced about for nameless pauper graves, within the village church-yard.

Strange, is n't it, that the poor child's heart bounds at these first words of love? Strange she should be so imprudent as to go home with him who, for the first time, offers her fire, and food, and shelter!

Strange, too, that she should look so much like a lady, — so

much like one of your set, Miss Lofton, — now that the tangled hair is braided up with jewels, and the slender figure draped in silks and satin. But the vain man wearies at length of his plaything.

He has taught her the lore of many a land, — the transcendentalism of the Germans, the gay infidelity of France, — but never once life's greatest lesson, "Thou, God, seest me!"

What wonder that she falls lower and lower, until, with a still more haughty contempt, you gather up your jewelled robe, and cross the side-walk to avoid the contamination of her presence! True, Jesus said to such an one, in other days, "Go, daughter, sin no more;" but you — O, you have a code of morals a shade purer than the carpenter of Galilee!

But "there's an hour that comes to all;" some time the scenes of that first night may visit you, — there may be stains upon your robe you will not care to see.

" Ah! Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
You put strange memories in my head;
Not thrice your branching limes have blown
Since I beheld the pauper dead!"

KATE LYNN'S BRIDAL.

A STORY OF THE FIRST OF MAY.

IN commencing a household tale of our quiet little village, let me warn the reader to expect no highly-wrought dreams of poetry or romance. The quiet development of a character formed amid the woods and glens of New England is the most I can promise him.

Kate Lynn was no beauty, after the type which poets and painters have dreamed and pictured. Indeed, by the side of Blanche Ingram, she would have been called quite plain, and Mistress Genevra Fanshawe would have annihilated her pretensions altogether. Her father, Doctor Francis Lynn, was a kind, noble, good-hearted man,—a physician of the old school, and, sooth to say, he lost no more lives by his adherence to system than he saved by his quiet benevolence and more than fatherly care. His house had been a widower's mansion for several years before my acquaintance with the beautiful village of Ryefield; but I had heard many a tale of a gentle, sweet-voiced woman, who used to wander over hill and meadow-land by his side, and who closed her blue eyes at last, in a dreamless sleep, with her head lying on his breast. At the time our story opens, Kate Lynn was a graceful girl of nineteen, as blithe and merry as the wild fawn in a Western forest. Her complexion was

a clear brunette, and her large black eyes were the reflex of as pure a soul as ever shrined itself in a human temple.

She looked almost beautiful sometimes, with the crimson rose-buds knotted in the heavy braids of her raven hair; but her features were far from regular, and you would have been as much puzzled to find a natural rank for her loveliness, as a connoisseur who should attempt to criticize, by classic rules, the anomalous, half-barbaric, and yet tasteful, architecture of some of our modern buildings.

Such a treasure of a house-wife as was our Kate, — so exact, so neat, with the clean cloth always spread on her bright, mahogany table, at just such an hour, the napkins looking like full-blown white lilies in their tasteful rings, and the fresh fruit bedded thick in green and clustering leaves!

Such a picture of comfort as was her snug little parlor, of an evening, — the bright fire burning in the polished grate; the easy-chair drawn up before it; the gay, tasteful slippers, embroidered by Kate's own white fingers; and, sweeter, fairer than all, our tiny little Kate herself, perched on a low stool at the window, listening, as it seemed, with heart and eyes, as well as ears, for her father's well-known footsteps upon the gravel-walk.

Kate had a sister — a fair, graceful girl, whom every one called "sweet Lizzie Lynn." She was just fifteen when our story opens, and the gayest, merriest, and, withal, the prettiest little sprite you could meet between Maine and Louisiana.

Kate Lynn was scarcely ten years old when her dying mother had placed the little Lizzie's hand in hers. "Kate," whispered the dying woman, "you are older than Lizzie; it may be in your

power to guard her from many sorrows. Promise me, darling, that you will give her, as far as may be, a mother's love; that you will think no grief too great to shield her path from sadness."

And Kate Lynn gave that solemn pledge, kneeling at the side of the bed, with the deep eyes of the dying looking into her own, and the grief-waves swelling and choking the young life in her little heart, till it seemed as if mother and child might be fain to rest them in the same grave. There are those who would think this a strange promise to be exacted from a child of ten; but Mrs. Lynn had read those young hearts, and she knew her children well.

It may be that the little Lizzie was the dearest, on the principle that we become most strongly attached to those who require our protection, for their very weakness; but in the mother's love for her black-eyed Kate was blended a strong commingling of respect. Already had the child begun to make manifest the strength that was in her, — strength of will, and strength of love, — and Mrs. Lynn felt that she was trusting her youngest darling to no broken reed, when she confided her to the love and care of her elder sister Kate.

When the sod was dropped upon her mother's coffin, no tears fell from Kate Lynn's dark eyes, no cry escaped from her pallid lips; only from her struggling heart burst one sob, — so low, so deep, it seemed more like a moan, — and then she was hushed, and still, and very calm. She drew the little Lizzie to her breast, and in that hour, amid the throes of her orphan sorrow, was born in Kate Lynn's heart a love than which no mother's tenderness was ever deeper, or more enduring, — a love which was destined to exert an influence upon her whole future.

Kate had grown up at home, educated by her father's own care, thoroughly, but by no means fashionably. Other advantages were at her command, had she chosen; but those, she said, would be quite enough for her, and "there would be no one to care for papa" if she were gone. So she struggled on, mindful of his lightest wish, caring for his most trifling needs, guarding Lizzie from every touch of care or sorrow, and gleaning, meanwhile, many a page of philosophy from the ponderous tomes of those strange old writers, half sages, half seers; many a gem of sparkling song from quaint old poets; and treasuring in the cloisters of her pure young heart every strange and mystic voice of fount and woodland.

But Lizzie, strange as it may seem, was most decidedly the favorite of good Dr. Lynn. Perhaps it was her beauty, — singular in its power of fascination, even in her infancy. Many a stranger paused to gaze for a moment on the graceful child, with her clear blue eyes, and the long tresses falling like a shower of sunlight over her white robes. What wonder, then, that this beauty should have been all-powerful at home, joined, as it was, to a voice and manner the sweetest in the world, and a disposition affectionate even in its unchecked wilfulness.

No home education was good enough for Lizzie! Hard as it was for Kate to part with her, not for worlds would she have placed *her* wishes in even momentary opposition with what she believed to be for her sister's best interest. And so, for three years previous to the opening of our tale, Lizzie, now a fair "young lady" of fifteen, had been a pupil at a fashionable boarding-school in a distant city.

Vine Cottage (the pleasant home of good Dr. Lynn) had

meantime been very lonely, until six months before we introduced it to our readers, when its solitude was enlivened by Stanley Grayson, the handsomest of medical students. He had become almost like a brother to our darling Kate, whom he seemed to deem the very impersonation of all womanly loveliness. I said *almost* like a brother. I am going to tell you how he proved there was a shade's difference on the first of May, on which our story opens.

For a whole three weeks before this eventful first of May, all Ryefield had been in a state of fermentation, of which only a country village is capable. Many a kitchen had borne witness to the solemnization of certain mysterious culinary rites, by which round, honest-looking cakes were made incontinently to engulf the hearts of raisins and sweetmeats; while cream turned pale with the discovery that it was freezing up in the very glow of the spring sunshine; and good, motherly hens looked with the most rueful faces on great piles of broken egg-shells.

The one milliner's shop, too, — O, such consultations as were holden there, such borrowings of patterns, and furbishing of bonnets, — such busy needles, seeming to glow and brighten in the light of smiling faces!

The young men wore a look of unusual importance, and many a smart cane and new hat made its appearance in the village store, only to be smuggled into obscure home-nooks by these modern Mercuries.

The truth was, a grand picnic was to be holden in the old oak grove, and not a pretty girl in Ryefield but went to sleep with an earnest wish and a half-prayer for sunshine and blue skies on this long-looked-for May morning.

The wished-for day came at last, as at last every day must come, whether it be watched and longed for by bright eyes or dreaded by fond hearts, clinging to life and love, and waking to find themselves one day nearer change and death. Surely never was blue sky so *very* blue, or green fields so smooth and soft and smiling. And surely never were young faces so fair, so full of all the charm of refined friendliness!

The queen for the day was a proud, stately-looking beauty. There was a world of command in her firm step, and in every gesture of that small, white hand. A more than regal pride flashed in her full, dark eye, and the crown of the Bourbons never rested above a brow more noble. Others were there, too, young and passing fair; but I missed one face, dearer than all to me. Hush! She was coming. Kate Lynn was by my side at last, and with her the handsome Stanley Grayson.

It struck me, as I looked on him, that I had never seen a more perfect type of manly beauty. His hair was auburn, with a rich tint of gold, and now, as he stood in the sunlight, it seemed all a-glow. His whole face beamed, and the classical contour of his lower features struck me as it had never done before.

The forehead was broad and full; the large, laughing hazel eyes were what the Scotch call *bonny*; they had a bold, fearless, but quite charming expression, in which, however, was blended a certain something, which, against one's will, conveyed to the mind a faint sense of insecurity. This something was deepened in its tendency by the mouth and chin, certainly most-beautiful in themselves, but *paining* you, as it were, by their very beauty,—or, perhaps, in spite of it,—with a vague feeling that it were well not to trust too deeply in Stanley Grayson's power of

continuity. There was a half-wicked mirth there too, that teased you, because it always lurked there, without any ostensible cause. But, after all, he was strangely handsome; and so thought Kate Lynn, if one could judge by the unwonted light in her bright black eyes.

Kate was certainly a sweet girl in holiday costume. Her dress of simple white muslin contrasted beautifully with the clear olive of her complexion; and the quaker-like simplicity of her black braids was sufficiently relieved by the crimson rose-buds and green leaves which nestled there as if at home.

The day passed very pleasantly, the collation was a *chef d'œuvre*, and the blue sky smiled upon fair young faces, radiant with the joy of youth, which, when once gone, comes back, alas! never again.

It was towards the close of the afternoon when Kate Lynn found herself quite alone with the handsome young physician. Over them was the blue sky and the bright sun, but the rays fell upon them with a tempered warmth, through broad canopies of thick oak boughs; the moss was green and soft beneath them, and warmer, brighter than all, grew the blush on Kate Lynn's fair cheek, as the young man threw himself on the grass beside her, and pressed her small hand to his lips.

"So, Katie, little one," he whispered, "you think you love me just like a brother, do you?"

"Why don't you speak, dear child? Why, how you're blushing! Ah, Katie, darling!" — and he stole his arm about her waist. "No, my little Kate, you *don't* love me like a brother; you love me as I love you, far more than that; and by and by you'll be my little wife, won't you? Nay, Kate, don't weep so;

I am not joking; I love you — love you as I never loved woman before, — I would have you all mine. Can't you love me, Katie?" O, how smiles, tears and blushes, struggled for the mastery over poor Katie's face, as she answered,

"Yes, sir; yes, Mr. Grayson, you know I love you very much indeed."

"No, no, little one; that won't do. Not Mr. Grayson; — say, 'Stanley, I love you!'"

"Well, then, 'Stanley, I love you;' will that do?" and suddenly Katie's manner regained all its accustomed archness and *naïveté*. O, how bright her eyes were when she again joined our circle, as Stanley Grayson's betrothed! She was always womanly, and her deep joy showed itself only in the light in her eyes, and the new music-tone which blent with her clear, ringing laugh, causing it fairly to swell out its exultation upon the air. I suppose every one has heard such laughs; but they only come from very young hearts, in the first flush of that wild joy, which time must chasten, if it does not wholly take away.

I found, a few days since, some leaves from Katie's diary, written in those sunny days, and I will insert them here. She was not romantic, not at all; but, with her mother sleeping beneath the grave-yard turf, and her only sister rather a child than a companion, she had had few friends with whom to share the dreams and hopes which make their phantom light and shade in every human heart, not quite of the earth, earthy. This was why, since first her childish fingers had learned to guide a pen, Kate had written out fresh leaves from her inner life; making confidential leagues with reams of clear, white paper, bound up in Russia leather. Of those leaves I have but few; most were

burned, and their ashes scattered to the winds of heaven. Of the few that remain, the first was written the day after her betrothal, and the light of her pure young love seems to come down through the long lapse of years, and make a halo round the delicate characters of her clear Italian hand-writing.

“ May 2nd.

“ Can it be that only one sun has set and risen since Stanley Grayson called me his,—since another and a dearer life grew into mine, with the knowledge that I was beloved? O, joy! great, unutterable joy, whose seeds were sown in grief, and watered by the hot tears which made the flowers grow upon my mother's grave! Who shall say, if I had not been thus desolate. I could have felt so deeply this wondrous bliss of love?

“ How strange it seemed last night, when we were quietly at home, after all the excitement of the day, to have him taking care of me so tenderly! We had had the stove carried away at house-cleaning time, and the air was cold. He saw I shivered, and said I must be wrapped up; but when I would have gone after my shawl, he stopped me, and went himself. How carefully he folded it around me! and when I placed my hands in his to thank him, he raised them to his lips, but presently gathered me, hands, shawl and all, to his heart, and sat down with me in his arms, at the window, in the moonlight.

“ O, what a long time we sat there! I seemed to cling to him, and look up to him so trustfully, and he,—O, I know he loves me!

“ There is no doubt, no distrust. I know he will be mine only till his life shall end.

“This morning I really seemed to be growing pretty, for I was so happy that my face was fairly radiant; as I looked in the glass, my black eyes sparkled, and I thought, as I buttoned my simple gingham morning-dress, nothing else ever became me so finely. Stanley must have thought so too, for he put his hand upon my head, and, smoothing back my hair, whispered, ‘Ah Katie, you must n’t grow handsome so fast, or I’ll be afraid of you, by and by, my gypsy queen.’ I don’t wonder he calls me gypsy; for I’m sure I look like it, with my brown face and straight black hair.

“O, how often I wished for Lizzie’s blue eyes, and golden curls! but I don’t seem to mind them now; for, brown and small and homely as I am, Stanley loves me! I declare, here I’ve sat writing in the sunshine till dinner-time. Betty never did set things right without me, and I must go help her. What a sunshine! I can’t believe the world was ever half so bright before!”

“May 9th.

“A week has passed—a long, sunny week of happiness! Stanley says we must be married in September—his birth-day, September fifth. Papa, dear, good papa, has given me *carte blanche* as to money. He says I never did cost him anything yet, and have only been a help to him, all my life; and now, when he’s going to lose me, he will give me all he can. Poor papa! I fear, though he likes Stanley, he is hardly reconciled to the idea of my leaving home; for, when he spoke of my going away, the tears came to his eyes, and he looked so regretfully at his easy-chair, and the little ottoman where I always sit beside him! It

seemed so selfish in me to go and leave him, — him who has always been so kind to me, — and for one, too, whom I had never seen, a few short months ago! The tears came to my eyes, and for the moment I was half resolved to send Stanley away without me; but, O, I know that already my soul is married to his soul, and I cannot give him up. Lizzie will come home in July, and she can stay with papa. Do I love Stanley better than papa? Why do I not say Lizzie will do for Stanley? And why would she not — she, so good, so young, so very beautiful?

“Down, selfish heart of mine! The truth must be uttered. I find it seared upon my soul. Stanley is dearer to me now than all things earthly!”

“June 5th.

“O, how dear, how much dearer than ever, my future husband is every day becoming to my heart! How long a time since I’ve written here before! but then I’m so busy, and so happy!

“There are such webs and webs of cloth to be made up! All the forenoon I am cutting and planning things, and seeing to Betty; and in the afternoon Stanley usually contrives to stay at home, and read to me, while I work. Why, I never knew before what a little ignoramus I am, until I saw how much he knew. But, then, I am improving; I understand better when he reads to me, and I seem to grow wiser under his teaching. He says I am gifted naturally. I wonder if I am! I never thought of it before. I’ve always been content to love what was beautiful in others, without sounding the depths of my own spirit, to see whether pearls lay sleeping beneath the waves.

“Dear me! What am I saying? I wonder if Stanley would n't call that a simile! Whoever thought cotton cloth was so pretty a sight as it looks to me now—all these sheets and towels spread out so nicely on the grass to dry, and all so prettily marked, too, with my new name that is to be—‘Kate Grayson!’ Stanley would have it so. He was to mark them, because he writes so well; and he went and put that name on, mischievous fellow!

“It does n't seem as if I had any right to them. Can it be that will be my name, some time? I suppose so, and yet it does n't seem the least in the world natural. I wonder if it's wicked to be glad Stanley is an orphan! I am afraid it is, and yet I don't know why it should be; for God took his parents away, and it is n't wicked to say God's will be done. It seems a thought so dear, so precious, that there is not one heart on earth which can come between Stanley's and mine!—that there is no one else very near or dear to him, and he can give me all his love!

“Somehow it seems to blend a religious ecstasy with my happiness. I feel that I am all he has, and in my heart wells up a prayer that God will help me to be a good angel, guarding his life.

“He called me his guardian angel, once. Somehow it made my heart thrill so with joy, that it choked me. I could not bear it. I bade him not to call me so, for I was n't good, I was no angel; and he has not said it since. I have been thinking whether, some time, when I am his wife,—when I strive earnestly, as God knows I will, to make his life bright and happy,—he will not come to me in the twilight, and put his arms about me, with the tears swimming in his eyes, and whisper, ‘My life's good angel—my wife!’

“My wife! How sweet those words will sound from him! He called me so once, the other day; but it frightened me, it seemed so unreal, the foretaste of a happiness which, alas for it! may never come!

“Hush! I hear the carriage. That is he, home again, so soon, smiling at me, and sending me kisses through the window, as he unfastens his horses. I must hurry this out of sight, for I would not have him know what a silly child I am.”

“July 11th.

“O, how it rains!—Such a perfect wail as the wind makes, hurrying by, as if its viewless feet were ‘swift to do evil!’ Poor Lizzie! she is inside the stage, I suppose; she will have a long, uncomfortable ride! I don’t know why it is, but my soul seems to go out toward her to-night more than ever. I have thought of Stanley so much lately, that I’ve not had so much time to think of my poor child, and now my heart is reproaching me. Sweet Lizzie! She and Stanley have never met. How proud I am of them both! I am sure they must be pleased with each other. Stanley is in his room now. I sent him up to put on his black coat, and that new vest in which he looks so well.

“Papa is asleep in his drowsy-looking easy-chair; Betty is burning her face over the kitchen-fire; and I, Kate Lynn, — Kate Grayson that is to be, — sit here writing. Heigho! I wish Lizzie would come. Dear child! I had Betty make those nice little cakes to-night, which she loves so much; and I put beside

her plate the little silver cup she used to tease to drink out of. Nonsense! what a silly girl I am! I am forgetting that Lizzie is a miss of fifteen now. O dear, my child Lizzie! The stage is so late to-night; but is n't that the horn?"

" July 18th.

" Yes, it was dear Lizzie. Stanley heard the horn too, and hurried down stairs. I bade him go and meet Lizzie; for it was raining, and papa was n't half awake. I followed him to the door, and he received Lizzie in his arms. She thought it was papa, for, what with the night and the rain, it was quite dark; and she pressed her lips to his face again and again. But when he brought her into the pleasant, brightly-lighted parlor, and set her down, she pushed from her white shoulders her heavy cloak, and glanced around; that is, as soon as she could, for at first I held her to my heart so closely she could see nothing. When papa took her in his arms, and welcomed her, and bade God bless her, she glanced at his slippers and dressing-gown, and then at Stanley, who was looking at her with a shade of amusement at her perplexity, and yet with the most vivid admiration I ever saw portrayed on his fine features. At last he laughed out, merrily.

" 'I see, little lady!' he exclaimed, playfully, ' you are wondering who I am, and what earthly business I had to be lifting you from the stage, and cheating your good father out of so many kisses that it would be sheer robbery, if there weren't enough left on those pouting little lips. Well, it's no great loss, after all, my blue-eyed fairy! for I'm no less a person than your brother-in-law that is to be, Stanley Grayson.'

“Lizzie seemed quite shy of him at first; but they are getting on together nicely now. Papa has bought Lizzie such a handsome little pony, and Stanley is teaching her to ride. They are gone now for a long ride over the hills. How pretty the dear child looked, as she cantered away, in her deep-blue riding-dress. Sweet Lizzie! Even Stanley says she is the prettiest person he ever saw. I wonder if it was envy I felt when he said that! I guess not, for I'm sure I want him to love her; but somehow, of late, the old longing has come back again, for Lizzie's blue eyes and golden curls.”

“July 25th.

“I am a little lonely, I'm left so much alone now. The long rides over the hills continue, and of course I stay at home, for there is no horse for me to ride. Stanley comes and kisses me just before he goes off, and says, ‘You are always so busy, Katie!’ but he says nothing of late about the reason I am so busy — nothing about our marriage.

“I mentioned it once, and he seemed hurt — almost angry. We have no more of those quiet little talks about our future, when I shall be all his own. He is good still, but so different! The other night, — it was a little thing, — but we went to walk, and neither Lizzie nor I put anything over us. The air was colder than we thought, and Stanley exclaimed, ‘Why, Kate, we must not let our little fairy, here, go without a shawl. She needs so much care, the baby!’ And, springing lightly over the fence, he ran back and brought a shawl for Lizzie, but none for me. I needed one as much as she, but pride would not let me speak of it; and I would not go back myself to fetch one, lest it should

look like a reproach to him. The next day, what with cold, and stiff-neck, I was punished for my folly and my carelessness.

“At first, Lizzie used to kiss me, and tell me how pleased she was that she was going to have such a dear, noble brother-in-law. But she never mentions it now; and I, too, have ceased alluding to it, because it makes her look pained. And yet, she surely doesn't dislike him, for she goes to ride with him every day, and every day comes back looking more sparklingly beautiful; though somehow she seems growing thinner and slighter.

“It cannot be — but no, I will not even think of it. Stanley is true — true as steel; and Lizzie, sweet child, never thought of love in her life. God bless them! How I love them both!”

“July 27th.

“Two days, and I am writing here again; but O, how changed! I have been struck by a thunderbolt. I have had a struggle, brief, but very fierce; and it is past. I was sailing in a fair ship, upon calm waters; there were only a few clouds in the sky. Sunlight rested on the waves, and in the distance I could see a floating pleasure-island, green and calm, made beautiful with tropic flowers, where gorgeous birds rested, and sang love-songs all the day. Merrily the bark dashed onward. Loved forms were by my side, and one dearer than all was at the helm; but from the clear sky a tempest-blast swept suddenly. It had sobbed no warning of the doom it was bringing us.

“There was a moment of agony. Shrieks and groans rose

upon the air; prayers, and pleading wails of human sorrow. Rain-clouds swept over us, big with bitter, bursting tears; and then my boat went down!

‘In the billows’ joyous dash of death went down.’

“There was night, and darkness, and every soul perished — every soul but me. The waves took from me love, faith, every joy of hope or memory, then dashed me upon the rocks, and left me — *Life!*”

“How I longed for death! My soul beat its prison-bars in vain, but it came not. I wonder I can write my own story so calmly. I suppose it is because I have no more hope, no more fears, because all the joy and life have been ground out of my heart, and I only stay now, — I do not live!

“Let me see. It was night before last. I wrote here until the light faded, and then I went into the long arbor in the garden, to watch the sun go down. O, what a beautiful sight it was! — such clouds of rose, and gold, and crimson, and anon one of pure, snowy white, as if an angel’s wing had cleft the gorgeous canopy to pave the blue with glorious stars, those ‘things which look as if they would be suns but durst not.’ I felt my heart swelling with a quick, exultant sense of life. A dancing flame seemed to leap up in it, as when a candle flickers brightly in its socket, just before it goes out. At last, ‘the stars, the forget-me-nots of the angels,’ rose up, sweet, and pale, and silent; and, going into the further end of the arbor, apart from observation, I threw myself down to dream. All things seemed to love me. The jasmine drooped downward, and laid its long green fingers on my brow, softly, like the touch of a mother’s

hand. The air seemed heavy with the perfume of night-blooming flowers; and my thoughts

‘Were such as thrill the heart, in youth’s rich summer time
Of life, and beauty, and sweet hope, and passion’s golden prime.’

I heard horses’ feet at last, and then steps approaching the arbor. I was happy enough to be playful; and I said, ‘I will keep still, and let them look for me.’

“But it seemed I was not the object of their search. The moon shone on them full and bright, but I was in the shadow; and I saw Stanley, *my* Stanley, take Lizzie to his heart, and press his lips to hers. It may have been wrong in me to remain concealed; but who shall blame me?”

“More than my life hung upon that one moment, and I could not stir! The first words that fell upon my ear were—

“‘Yes, yes, Lizzie, I know it—I know it is sin. But I cannot, cannot help it. O, Lizzie, I worship you so madly!’

“‘But Kate, Stanley?’

“‘Yes, Lizzie, I know it; I know I am a brute; I hate myself: but Kate does not, cannot love as we do. I could bear it for myself; but you, Lizzie, to know how you love me, — to see you wasting away, and feel that I have done it, — sweetest, dearest, purest! By all the saints, you must be mine!’

“‘Can I?’

“And I could almost see my sister tremble as she spoke.

“‘O, Lizzie, I do not know. Kate is so good — she might release me; but how can I ask it? I remember how solemnly our vows were plighted before God. Kate is all she was

when those vows were pledged. How dare I break them? How can I tell her that I am fickle, and a villain?’

“‘Fickle, Stanley?’

“‘Well, dearest, not that exactly, for I never loved Katie as I love you; but I have been so hasty, so wrong! Why could I not have waited till you came home? Why was I so mad as to dream I loved her, other than as a brother might?’

“‘O, cruel, cruel!’ I gasped, in my desolate corner—‘cruel, even to take away the joy of thinking that you once loved me!’ And the weight of woe swept over me so wildly, that, for the first time in my life, I fainted. When I recovered, the moon was shining clear and full; she had reached her zenith. The birds were still, the bower was deserted, and over all rested the strange hush and silence of midnight.

“For a time I could remember nothing. There was a dull, heavy pain pressing intolerably upon my forehead; but it seemed as if I had awoke after the nightmare, and was trembling to the remembered horrors of some fearful dream. Gradually sense and memory came back to me. I rose and crept toward the house, clinging for support, as I passed, to the vines and shrubs along my path. Very silently I stole up stairs, and entered our room—Lizzie’s and mine.

“She lay there sleeping, and I thought that I had never seen her look so beautiful. Her white arms were tossed above her head; her cheeks were fairly crimson, and over them drooped her long, golden lashes, heavy with round, sparkling tears. Poor, innocent, motherless little lamb! How my heart

smote me as I gazed on her, that I had for one instant dreamed of opposing my happiness to hers! And yet the struggle was a fierce one. I knelt down, and drew Lizzie's head to my bosom, very gently, lest I should waken her. I thought of all the past, of the promise I had made to my dying mother; and then I prayed, still holding Lizzie on my breast. I never prayed so before. It was a prayer in my own fashion, but very earnest, and I think very effective. I seemed to come near to a Great Spirit, and to feel my heart kindling with the light from the divine eyes looking into it. I knelt there till the moon went out, and the dawn, in her gray robes, had stolen softly up the cloud-stairs of the east, and quenched, with rosy fingers, the stars hanging there, pale and wan, like half-exhausted lamps. Then I rose, and, putting Lizzie gently back upon the pillow, I pressed one kiss, long and earnest, on her pure brow, and, with trembling fingers, arranged my somewhat disordered hair. As I stepped to the mirror, I caught a glimpse of a face so pale, so haggard, that it startled even myself; but I hurried down into the garden, and walked to and fro, till the cool, fresh air of the morning had somewhat revived me.

“At last I heard a hasty step, and in an instant Stanley was by my side. His face bore the traces of great care and weariness, and all my love for him rushed up to my heart with ten-fold strength. O, how I pitied him — far, far more than myself! I knew his proud heart, and his strong sense of right; and felt that, whatsoever way he turned, there was bitter suffering before him. With but the one wish strong in my heart, of sparing him from pain, at whatever cost to myself, I spoke hurriedly:

“Stanley, I have been thinking that I cannot leave my father. Will you release me from our engagement? I don't think we are suited to each other, and my duty lies elsewhere.’

“He looked surprised, even pained. I could see, too, that his pride was wounded; and yet, spite of himself, an expression of instant joy and relief danced into his fine eyes; but he merely said,

“‘Ah, Katie, you never loved me!’

“Somehow I could not bear that; it overthrew all my resolves of silence and caution, and I said, boldly,

“‘I cannot tell, Stanley — I think I have loved you; but it may be not as Lizzie does. I heard all, last night. I was sitting in the arbor, and a spell was on me that I could not stir; and, Stanley, Lizzie is yours. Please don't thank me; I could not bear that just yet. I do it, too, more for Lizzie's sake — the poor child! Stanley, you will be my brother, and I'll try and be a good sister. Go and tell Lizzie, and make her happy, as I shall be, when I see you both smile again.’

“Stanley heard me through, and then, kneeling upon the ground beside me, he pressed my hand again and again to his lips.

“‘O, Kate,’ he exclaimed, ‘I ought not to marry you — I am not worthy of you. I should feel as if my wife were an angel, rather than a woman. No one else was ever half so good, Kate; and God will make you happy! But, Kate, your father! —’

“And he rose and stood beside me.

“‘I have thought of that, Stanley, and I will speak to him. I am essential to his comfort now, and he'll soon be glad that

his little housekeeper is not going to leave him, and that his darling Lizzie is to be so happy!’

“I had said all I could, and I hurried in. At breakfast we all met again. I saw Stanley had told Lizzie, for she looked at me once or twice with a glance of inexpressible tenderness, in some sense blended with compassion; but when she turned her blue eyes on Stanley, her young face was fairly radiant with happiness. I forced myself to make the tea for papa, and pour coffee for them, laughing and talking merrily the while, lest their joy should be clouded; but all the time I could feel how my own heart was struggling, choking, in black, bitter waves of trouble.

“After breakfast I detained papa, and told him, very simply, that Lizzie and Stanley had concluded they could love each other, and, if he would give them his blessing, they would marry, and let me stay at home to care for him. For a moment, he looked at me sharply, as if to read my very heart; but I would not let him see it. I turned my eyes away, and, moving to the flower-stand, commenced picking the withered leaves off my monthly rose-bush.

“‘Kate,’ said my father, at length, speaking quickly, ‘do you like this plan? Are you quite in earnest?’

“‘Yes, sir, quite,’ I answered; for I could not have told him what was in my heart, and I wished to complete the arrangement with as few words as possible.

“‘I hope Stanley isn’t giving you up for Lizzie, against your will?’

“‘No, sir; I proposed the measure first myself. I saw that Lizzie loved Stanley, and would not be happy without him; and I

felt that you needed me, dear father; so I asked Stanley to let me stay. You won't send me away, will you, dear, dear father?' and, going up to him, I caught his good, honest hand, and raised it to my lips.

" 'Send you away! no, indeed! but I don't understand it, at all. You are a good girl, Katie, a comfort to your old father, and always were. You may give the children my blessing.' And he put his hand upon my head, and kissed me with un-wanted tenderness, as he left the house.

" I found 'the children' in the arbor which had witnessed the declaration of their love. I gave them my father's blessing, and Lizzie threw her arms round my neck, and cried, 'O, Kate, God *will* bless you! no mother could have loved me more! Sister, dear sister, you have never suffered me to be an orphan!'

" The words thrilled me; once more they recalled my promise to my mother. Had I not kept it well? was I not keeping it, at God only knew what cost to myself? Stanley pressed my hand to his lips, and, saying some pleasant word, I turned away. I paused for a moment, and heard Stanley say, 'You see, Lizzie, Kate never loved me. I believe she is glad to be free once more; and I — O, Lizzie, my bride, my beautiful!'

" Beautiful! yes, that was it; Lizzie was beautiful! If I had been, — but no matter. I mustn't write any more now. I have told the events; the feelings must not be written here!"

" August 27th.

" A month has passed since I wrote here last; I hardly know why, myself. It has been a long summer month. Days are so

long in summer, and they have seemed like centuries of late. What a beautiful day it is! The sunshine smiles so pleasantly on the fields, and the bright-winged birds sing, and the insects hum lazily, or go to sleep upon the flowers. It seems to me I never saw such a scene of calm, quiet beauty; — as if Nature had on her holiday garments, decked newly for the sun, her lover.

“ But why do I write of the world around me, rather than of the world within me? of the external, rather than the internal? ”

“ It must be because I have no internal world now. It is as if a simoom had swept over the fields of my heart, and left them barren and desolate. I hope for nothing, and I fear nothing. That is, I hope for nothing but heaven, and I fear nothing but sin. Alas for poor, weak human nature, that it cannot content itself with these visions of eternal glory! It will go pining for that love, human and earthly, for which I look no more. I am peculiar, it may be, but it is not possible for me to love more than once. The dreams I have dreamed I can never dream over again, nor do I wish it; I have locked them up, like priceless jewels, in the casket of memory, and perhaps, by and by, long years from now, when I have grown older and stronger, and these locks are gray, I can put them back from my forehead, and be calm. Then, in some twilight hour of those other years, I can unlock this casket, and look once more on the jewels and precious stones that were twined round the brow of my youth.

“ Nine days more, and Lizzie will be a bride, a happy bride; for how can his wife be otherwise? They wish me to be bridesmaid, and I have consented; it will be hard, but I would not

that they should know the sorrow in my heart; I would not that word or deed of mine should jar upon their happiness.

“Lizzie is very thoughtless, poor little thing! but very good and pure; I hope he will cherish her as she deserves. She has never been used to care; even the preparations for her bridal I have taken upon myself. She has ridden and walked with Stanley, and I have sewed on sheets and pillow-cases, and bridal robes. I was glad to have it left to me, for I should have been wretched had I not been busy; even as it is, I fear I have repined sometimes, — but it must not be. Here they come, cantering along; Lizzie’s face is bright with happiness, and Stanley is looking on her with—O! such fond, husband-like pride! I will go and meet them!”

“September 7th.

“Lizzie is married, and they have gone; surely no bride ever before looked so beautiful! Her long curls floated over her white robe like sunshine over snow; and her cheeks were fairer than ever, shaded so faintly by her rich veil. She trembled during the ceremony, and I could feel how firm and strong was the lover-like pressure with which Stanley clasped her waist. When we knelt in prayer, his arm was around her still; and I seemed quite to forget my own existence, so intently was I occupied in watching them, so fervent were my prayers for their happiness. It was the hardest when Stanley came back to me, after Lizzie had said good-by, and he had put her in the carriage. He took both my hands in his, and, looking into my eyes whispered,

“ ‘O, Kate, I am so happy, and you have done it! God bless you!’ And he kissed my brow, and sprang into the carriage.

“O, how those words seem to ring in my ears yet, ‘You have done it!’ Yes, I had done it! How could I complain? I had voluntarily given him up; he was my brother now, and I must give him only a sister’s love! Well, it is past; I am glad it is over. I have no longer anything to dread; I don’t think it is best to write of what my feelings are, or my hopes might have been; I must be so busy as to give myself no time to be miserable.”

A year passed, and no more leaves were written in Katie’s diary. She seemed to feel it a sin even to think of by-gones, much more to write of them; and her life was made up of the past, — she had no present and no future. I mean by this that she looked forward to nothing with hope, and the calm sea of her life was undisturbed by incident or passion. Perhaps I ought to except Lizzie’s visits; for the young wife came home several times, and sometimes spent a week or two at Vine Cottage. Once or twice Stanley remained with her, but usually he left her there, and came after her when she was ready to return.

It is very true that lovers, during the season of courtship, for the most part, learn very little of each other’s real character. Any one who had known thoroughly Stanley and Lizzie Grayson would have trembled for their chance of happiness. Lizzie was, indeed, guileless and affectionate, but her mind had no great depth. Accustomed, from childhood, to be contradicted in nothing, her will was strong and determined, though she was guided almost entirely by impulse, instead of judgment. Natu-

rally a lover of ease, her education, though showy, had been superficial; and she assumed the ties of a wife without the faintest idea of discharging the duties. I said she was naturally very affectionate; I should have added, as far as affection is demonstrable by kisses and caresses; but her predominant feeling was a strong under-current of selfishness, which, though unseen, like the corner-stone of a building, formed the real basis to all her actions. As a child, her father and sister had loved her too fondly, and admired her too intensely ever to check her in her heedless pursuit of self-gratification. During the period of courtship and betrothal, Stanley had been so intoxicated with her beauty as to make all her whims his own; and, during the honeymoon, though he sometimes differed with her in opinion, one of her brilliant smiles would usually prove irresistible, carry her own point, and convince her husband that he was, or ought to be, the happiest man in the universe. But Stanley's character, though in some respects the exact counterpart of his wife's, was in others so radically different, as to make you wonder what could possibly have been the harmonizing medium to have drawn them together.

The truth was, Stanley had not thought of Lizzie so much as his wife, — a woman, happy, indeed, as every true woman must be with the man she loves, but yet tried oftentimes, and coming from the furnace with a character beautified and made purer by suffering; he had dreamed of her as a beautiful bride, a being whom he would be proud to hear called by his name; whom he could introduce to his friends, and then go home claiming this peerless object of the world's admiration as his own. It was his mistake that he had not looked further — that the white satin and

the bride had come between his vision and the future years ; but it was a mistake into which half the people in the world have fallen, and will continue to fall, until the world's end.

Stanley was an orphan, and, like his wife, had very early learned the omnipotence of his own will ; he had been accustomed to submit to no one, and to make few, if any, sacrifices in those little things in which sacrifices are so essential to the daily comfort of life. He was as thorough as Lizzie was superficial ; he had a mathematical horror of anything like carelessness, or want of exactness. The fondest dream of his manhood had been an intellectual wife, one who would be able fully to share in all his refined pleasures of taste and intellect.

And yet, during his acquaintance with Lizzie, previous to their marriage, he had never perceived her deficiencies. She was beautiful ; she sung and played enchantingly, and talked the prettiest of small-talk, in the sweetest and most musical accents imaginable. He had admired, almost idolized, her beauty ; hung enraptured over her piano ; and forgot, as men, even the best and most sensible of them, will forget sometimes, that this was not all of life.

Through the honey-moon the delusion lasted very comfortably. It was certainly a pleasant thing to travel with Lizzie ; to hear her lively, musical exclamations of surprise at the panorama of beauty which spread itself before them ; to have the fair being on his arm greeted with the silent homage of earnest glances, and suspended breath. But it was another thing, when they were settled in a house of their own, and, too late, he began to discover his mistake. If he commenced to plead his wishes in opposition to hers, Lizzie would have recourse to tears and hys-

terics, or overpower him with caresses; and he, reflecting how she had been indulged at home, would, for the most part, submit. Sometimes, when compliance seemed weak, or sinful, to his cooler judgment, he persisted; and then a new phase in Lizzie's character was revealed. She made her husband feel the power of her stinging sarcasm, and her bitter reproaches. Once she alluded to his old love for Kate, and taunted him with his perfidy; he had broken Kate's heart, she said, by his cruelty, and now he was breaking hers. Usually he had answered her — always gently at first, but latterly in cold, stern words, sometimes; but this time he said nothing, — he looked at her! There must have been power in his look, for Lizzie trembled and sat down, clinging to the chair for support.

Stanley was very pale, his hands were firmly closed, and his lips cold and white as death; but he only looked at her, and went out. Lizzie did not see him again till the next morning, and then there was no allusion made to the past by either. Her conscience reproached her bitterly for taunting him with a wrong that was done only for her sake, and which he might long ago have repented in sackcloth and ashes; and she was but too glad to leave the subject untouched, since he did not allude to it.

Mistaken course! how can a wife ever let a wrong go unexplained, unforgiven, when the right is hers, if she would but use it, to hang upon her husband's neck, and plead for peace and forgiveness, by the holy memories of olden love!

But Lizzie said nothing; and Stanley Grayson was a man who, unasked, could never forgive a wrong, — at least, could never forget one. The power of Lizzie's beauty was not all gone, and very easily she might have healed the wound; but she let it

alone — let it fester and corrode still deeper, while it was covered by a strict and almost forbidding courtesy and attention. But this wore off in time, and there was no outward difference in Stanley Grayson's behavior to his wife—at least, none that could be perceived by a woman like Lizzie, not exactly heartless, but frivolous and self-loving. He had accompanied her on her first visit home after their marriage, but after that he never came again to stay more than a few hours. I think Kate must have suspected something of his disappointment in his wife; but she kept her own counsel, and said nothing; throwing still more of caressing gentleness into her manner towards Lizzie; and seemed most anxiously trying to lighten her path by a sister's love, united to more than a mother's care.

Three years after her marriage, Lizzie Grayson was brought home, as it then seemed, to die. She had taken cold by going to the first party of the season too thinly clad; and yet, though her husband saw her health was failing, and remonstrated earnestly, and, for him, tenderly, she had persisted during the whole winter in an unprecedented course of gayety.

She had been home two weeks, and had been rapidly growing worse, when one evening her husband lifted her in his arms and sat down by the window, laying her head upon his shoulder, that she might once more gaze forth on the glory of the April sunset. Kate sat beside her, holding her thin white hand; and, as she looked up in her husband's face, and then turned her eyes on her sister, and her father, who was in his old seat by the fireplace, a smile of content passed over her face.

“I have much to say to you, dearest Stanley,” she whispered, “and you must let me say it now. You are so good to me, you

and Kate, and yet I wonder you do not hate me. I have been a sadly thoughtless, selfish child, and I have pained you often; you forgive me all now, don't you?"

A fond pressure of the hand, and an earnest, tearfully-loving glance, were Stanley's sole reply, and she continued,

"I was a child when you married me, Stanley,— a poor, weak, selfish child, not fit to be a wife,— and I have been a bad one. I am so weak I do not know, but I can't help thinking, if I were to live longer, I would do better; I would try harder to learn my duty, and I might make you happier,— but I do not know. I have always loved you, Stanley; let me tell you that, now I am dying, and you will believe it! Father, dear father, please to come here, and kiss me!"

Dr. Lynn started quickly, and pressed his lips to his daughter's brow; but, when he looked at her, the tears gathered in his eyes, and he turned away sorrowful, for on her face he read that fearful change, which no man can describe, but which goeth before death and the grave.

"Kate—Stanley!" whispered the dying girl, very faintly; and Stanley, entirely overpowered by the violence of his emotion, pressed his lips to Lizzie's, and then, laying her in Kate's arms, knelt beside her, and murmured wild and strangely earnest words of supplication. When once more he looked on her who had been joined to him in the strange and mystic tie of marriage, the form was there, indeed,— the cold, still, beautiful form,— but the light had faded from the blue eyes, the hands hung cold and powerless by her side!— Lizzie Grayson was dead!

It was the "leafy month of June," and Kate Lynn's twenty-fifth birth-day. Care and sorrow had made her look even older than that. Her cheeks were hollow, her figure thin, and amid her jetty hair lay broad streaks of silver; and yet, Kate was as attractive as at nineteen, and, perhaps, even more interesting. I said as attractive; for what she had lost in color, complexion, and symmetry of figure, she had more than gained in the calm, sweet pensiveness of her fair face, and the holy, tender, but inexpressibly beautiful light in her soft eyes. She had gone alone, at the twilight, to the green and mossy bank where she had first plighted her vows to Stanley Grayson. Sitting in the old seat, she drew from her pocket the miniature he had given her, and gazed long and fondly on the pictured features.

"It was the one love of life," she murmured, at length, "the love of life,—and he was false—"

"No, no Kate! say anything but that. Kate, my darling,—Kate, my worship!"

Kate raised her soft, beautiful eyes, and there, on the moss beside her, was kneeling Stanley Grayson. It was the first time they had met since the turf was put over Lizzie's grave; and a choking tide of old-time memories swelled Katie's heart, and nearly stifled her.

"Kate," he continued, speaking hurriedly, "I did love you; as Heaven is my witness, Kate, I loved you, when, long years ago, I knelt here by your side,—and, Kate, I never loved another! Lizzie came home, and she was beautiful,—O, so radiantly beautiful!—the fairest shape, I thought, my eyes ever rested on; we were thrown much together, and she loved me, as much as she could love; and I—I became intoxicated with

her glorious beauty. One night,—one fatal night,—we told our dream, and you heard us, Katie. The next morning you gave me up, so coldly, so calmly, that I thought you had never loved me. I thought I was happy, for Lizzie seemed all the fondest heart could ask, and the dream continued. When the romance was over, and I settled down with her as my wife, I felt the wrong then. Lizzie was a pet, a plaything, a pretty creature; you, Kate, the noble, unselfish woman, for whom I pined, who might have been the other half of myself. I came home with Lizzie once, and I felt it more and more. A passionate, wicked love for you was growing up in my heart; or, rather, it was the old love speaking out, haunting me, mocking me, confronting me defiantly, now that I was the husband of another. I left you, Kate, and I kept away from the charmed circle of your influence. True, you haunted me everywhere; but I was better away, and I had one comfort in the thought that your heart was light, that you had never loved me. Lizzie was good and sweet-tempered, generally; but she did not make me happy, for she could not understand me. You, Kate, suited me, to the finest fibre of my being; it seemed as if we were made for each other. At last, Lizzie died. O, how bitterly I reproached myself, as she lay dying, that I had not loved her better! how gladly I would have laid down my own life that she might go forth again, free and happy, into the beautiful earth!—but—she died. Something kept telling me that I had killed her; that, if I had loved her better, and guarded her more tenderly, she might have been happier,—she might have lived! I felt as if the brand of a murderer was upon my brow; I seemed to read scorn and hatred even in your

eyes, and I fled. Time has, in some sense, healed the wound, it may be; but it has only brightened your memory, and I came back to-night to plead with you for the old-time love. You must hate me, Kate; you won't have me, I know you won't,—but don't say no. If I must leave you, get up and walk away, and say nothing; for I can't—O, Kate, I can't hear your lips speak my doom!”

But Kate did n't get up and go away,—I guess it's not best for me to tell what Katie did; but, sure I am, there was a wedding in the old country church at Ryefield, September 5th, 1843; and that, dear readers, that was

KATE LYNN'S BRIDAL.

EIGHTEEN TO-DAY.

My birth-day ! Here I go, drifting down the stream of time, with the wrecks floating upon its swollen tide, and the buried hopes sleeping beneath, like entombed human creatures, lifting up their pale faces, and staring with their ghastly eyes. Here and there, bedded in pearls and coral, lie tufts of old-time memories — the heart's forget-me-nots !

As I look behind me, I see dim, shadowy floating islands of pleasure, peopled with forms that have made glorious my dreams. And there, beyond, rise cold, gray cliffs, where, in unguarded hours of storm and tempest, I have been transfixed with thunderbolts, and woke to life again by the fierce cries of demons.

But a hand of mercy has drawn a veil before the joys and sorrows of the past. It is a bright, rosy veil of mist, and they gleam faintly through it, like the dim, soft outlines of a far-off picture ; but the joys make not my heart beat quicker, nor do the griefs bring back a pang of fear. My Father looks on me from heaven, and the past, with its sins and errors, is a dead body, a cold corpse. It cannot rise again to haunt me ; I am strong now, and my heart sings, though my tired feet bear me onward as chief mourner at the burial of days that were !

TO A PICTURE OF KATE.

SOMETIMES I dream of thee at night ;
 Thy wild brown eyes,
 Thy phantom eyes,
Gaze on me with a live delight ;
And then I feel my brow o'erblown
 With tresses that must sure be thine.
In dreams I tremble to thy tone,
 In dreams I dare to call thee mine ;
While, gazing on me all the while,
 Those wild brown eyes,
 Those phantom eyes,
O'ersweep my spirit with a smile.

I know not where thou hadst thy birth ;
 But sure it was some country fair,
 Set floating in the upper air,
Some region that was not of earth ;
For nothing earthly ever shone
 With half the splendor of thine eyes,
The pale moon treading on alone
 (Though many an ocean silent lies
To gaze upon her calm, white face,
 O'erswept by waves of golden hair,
 And tracéd light, so heavenly fair)
Wears not one half thy spirit grace.

I think of goddesses divine,
While gazing on thy lofty brow,
And can but whisper, soft and low,
‘ Sure, thou hast drunk immortal wine ! ’
And then I say a legend o’er
 (’T was told at twilight by my sire,
As, with his tresses long and hoar,
 He sat beside the drift-wood fire),
How, many a lonesome year ago,
 When summer’s soft and balmy smile
 Lay warm upon the Ægean isle,
The Grecian gods kept court below.

And when upon the southern sea
 The night came down with shadows long,
 And snowy swans began their song
Of sad and plainéd melody,
Methought the gods, who there had striven
 In pleasant pastimes all the day,
Went up on cloudy stairs to heaven,
 And left thee, wearied with thy play,
Within a southern grove of balm,
 A sleeping, with thy phantom eyes
 Half-closed beneath the watching skies,
Like some fair statue, tranced in calm !

And, when I dream of thee at night,
 Thy wild brown eyes,
 Thy phantom eyes,
Oft wear a glory to my sight,
As if but now thou didst awake
 From sleeping by Thessalian streams,

Where not a breeze had dared to break
The silence of thy charmed dreams ;
And, gazing on me all the while,
Those wild brown eyes,
Those phantom eyes,
Thrill all my spirit to their smile !

CIS-ATLANTIC BORIBOOLA-GHA.

NEVER mind Peepy, Mrs. Jellyby! Let the child cry, — let him fall down stairs, and break his nose. What are a thousand Peepies now present, to the mighty schemes of our modern Borioboola-Gha, which will affect the destinies of myriads of Peepies yet to come? Can you fritter away your attention on one man, and his little troop of children, when that new lawgiver — that Moses — that Stephen Pearl Andrews — has told us, woman's chief duty is to be "true to herself, and not true to any man"? Thanks, Mr. Andrews! We, little girl that we are, didn't know our duty before. We've found out, now. Never mind if there were tears in his eyes, when he whispered, "I can't live, if you change!" We know our duty now, and it's not much matter what he suffers in so good a cause.

And you, Mrs. Jellyby, — you, with the exalted scope of your intellect, — surely, you cannot linger for an instant over darning-needles and pin-cushions!

You must see it's an affair of small moment whether Peepy's stockings are darned, or Mr. Jellyby's coat out at the elbows, compared with the mighty, the stupondous interest of persuading a half-million intelligent women to cut twelve inches from their dresses at the bottom, and add on a dickey and black scarf at the top!

Then you have other incentives to exertion, of, *if possible*, still more *stu-pid* — I meant to say, *stu-pen-dous* importance.

O, will not the ghosts of our grandmothers come out from among the wraiths of spinning-wheels and home-made linen, and smile their encouragement upon the marshalled ranks of their grand-daughters, the brave defenders of Women's rights?

Press on — the time may soon come when we, down-trodden and oppressed, held in the fearful thralldom of so many centuries, — a slavery to which the bondage of Uncle Tom was as nothing, and the myriad links of the Lilliputians weak as a melted snow-wreath, — when we, American women of the nineteenth century, may go forth, leaving home and firesides in charge of our worse and weaker halves, marshalling the bright-eyed ranks of our emancipated women, carrying the election with a rush, disposing of cabinet appointments as freely as cast-off dresses, and going home, at last, to make a further display of our magnanimity, in our utter disregard of such minor inconveniences as unswept rooms, unkempen hair, scalded children, muddy coffee, and the burnt sides of very dry toast.

O, let us rejoice in our exalted destiny — we, the regenerators of the world, the saviors of our nation! Don't breathe it, for worlds, Mrs. Jellyby; but, if you *can* stoop to be guilty of such a masculine vice as curiosity, I'll tell you what *I* thought, before I was awakened to my duty, as with the clang of a trumpet, by the bold words and high thoughts of Mr. Andrews, Miss Kelley, and other patriarchs and *patriarchesses*, who lead the van in our glorious battle for the right.

Don't whisper to them what I say, please, dear Mrs. Jellyby

because you know it might lose me the ambassador's appointment I am so anxious to obtain under the *first female President!*

You know I am reformed now; but I did use to think woman's noblest sphere was home, — her dearest right, the right to make bright flowers of home and heart spring up and blossom in some dear one's path.

I used to think it was so blest a thing, that round those whom God has made so sensitive the seven-fold walls of home and love were hedged, — that the cold cares of the outer world could not come nigh us, and we could only catch such faint glimpses of outdoor care and turmoil as lingered in the shade on some dear brow, which our lips loved to kiss away. It seemed to fill our heart with blessings, our eyes with thankful tears, that dear hands had built this sanctuary for our tenderer lives, and, amid all the cares of life, turned hopeful back to us for strength and cheer! I must confess, too, that I have not always boasted a soul above such light discomforts as burnt toast and muddy coffee, to say nothing of tearful faces and ragged coats.

Nay, in our day-dreams, we even used to picture the day when we should have a home; we fancied the bright fire, the cosy little table with its hissing urn, the easy-chair, the slippers, and the fond, fond welcome for one for whom busy, loving hands had retouched all. There came tears to our eyes, at that kiss upon our brow, at that voice whispering, "It gives me strength to toil, sweet wife, when I can turn at night to you and home!" Pah! the tears have come back again at the very thought, Mrs. Jellyby. Lend me your handkerchief; — there, the dream is passed now. Remember the appointment, and don't, for worlds, expose

ELLEN LOUISE.

SPRING-TIME OF THE HEART.

SOFT and warm on hedge-rows and dingles sleep the shine and shade of the sweet spring-time.

Young flowers look up to heaven with their wishful, tear-wet blue eyes; gay, laughing streams dash onward, rippling and dimpling into eddies; and over the graves of long ago green grass grows, and spring-buds bloom and brighten. Little birds sing their *Gloria Patri*, in a pleasant cadence, to the grand symphonies of the organ of the air; and, with the refrain, back to our hearts steal low, pleasant voices, from the *soul's own spring-time*.

The stream seems less fair to our tear-dimmed eyes than when our little brown fingers were building dams across it. The grass springs not so greenly as when we lay upon it in the sunshine, stringing garlands of dandelions and cowslips, and holding yellow butter-cups under round, dimpled chins, to see if little folks loved butter.

Never a cloud that flecks the sky seems half as bright as when the clearer vision of our childhood could see the seraph-faces peering through.

Not an anthem-note of bird or breeze but is jarred by discords in our own heart.

We gaze forth into the glad earth, and hear the delicate sing-

ing of the spring-birds, and catch the uncertain rustling when the earth arises from her winter swound, and blushes that the eyes of moon and stars have gazed upon her bare, unconscious bosom, and grown sick with love. Nature is our mother; mighty, glorious shape, we welcome her, with her pale hair floating backward in the gray of dawning, or the one bright star of eve resting, like the crown jewel in a diadem, upon her regal brow; — but we turn away, and remember that white hats are getting dear, and we must hasten and buy our blue velvet mantilla, before all that cheap piece is sold out, at Stewart's. The very breeze that fans our flushed cheeks, and sends the young blood back again heartward with a rejoicing tide, reminds us only of that new style of Spanish fans, — very *dear* they are, to be sure, — and sets us wondering how much *pa did* make in his last speculation.

There was only *one* whom all these pomps and vanities had never power to change — Our Nettie!

But, then, Nettie “was only another name for nature.” She was a strangely-sweet little thing, with her long golden curls, and her clear, spiritual blue eyes, — sweet and gentle as the June sky is bright, or the song of the spring-birds pleasant.

Old people shook their heads when they looked at her, and said she was one of those children whose names are always written on grave-stones.

I believe that even then Nettie had a kind of strange longing for death and heaven; for, sitting at my feet, one day, weaving flowers, and raising her large, thoughtful eyes, she whispered, “Nettie Neil! will they put it *so* on my grave-stone, Nellie?” And when I had answered, “Yes, darling,” she rejoined, “Nel-

lie, do you suppose Jesus in heaven is very big?" "Yes, darling: but *why?*" "O, 'cause it says he holds little children on his bosom; and he's got so many, he'd let *me* fall, if he was n't pretty big!" Then, pausing for a few moments, she looked upward with a holy faith, at once very strange and very beautiful in one so young, and whispered, "No, Nellie, *he will not let me fall* — something tells me so, in here," and she placed her baby hand upon her baby heart.

I am not superstitious! I can look a ghost in the face with exemplary composure; I can go down cellar dark nights without a candle, and to spiritual knockings I have always been enabled to turn a deaf ear; but I must acknowledge I never looked at Nettie Neil without a strange feeling that she was linked in some mysterious manner with the spirit-world — a vague expectation that I should see her melt away before my eyes!

But mortal hearts read poorly the counsels of the All-Glorious. Perhaps it is designed there should be always some angels on earth, guides to teach our earthlier natures the infinite glory of our lost heritage.

Nettie Neil lived: she is a wife now, — a rich man's wife, — and her small feet sink half buried in gorgeous velvet carpets, her fair form looks out from massive mirrors in heavy golden frames, and her clear eyes grow dim with tears as they rest on the pictured spiritual faces of saints and madonnas, or the meek, faint smile which hovers round the sculptured lips of the young Christ-child, wrought out by artists who have dreamed of heaven.

But she is very simple still, amid all this grandeur. The harshness and worldliness of her husband's spirit are exorcised, as he gazes in the clear eyes of his fair wife; and to her pure



THE CHILD'S FAITH.



soul there is no winter, nor any gloom, for round her whole life lingers the glorious sunshine of the spring.

But there are very few such hearts on earth; very few from whom the glory of the child-life passes not away; very few where the cool pleasantness of spring-time grows not hot and sultry in the fierce breath of summer.

Some — alas for it! — some there are, who have no child-life, nor any spring-time; hearts which never leap to the sound of a kindly word, never hear the faintest whisper of that *Great Heart of God*, where weary ones may rest! O, Heaven help them, *those* weary ones, for whom earth's life and light can never dawn; and Heaven help us to keep our hearts fresh and green, that we may not blush, as we go forth in the light and heavenly glory of the spring-time of earth, for a wasted heritage — the better, happier *spring-time of the heart!*

MABEL MURRAY'S BALL-DRESS.

O, WHAT a splendid establishment it was! Such gorgeous Turkey carpets upon the floor, and such magnificent materials for all kinds of garments and trimmings as lay scattered upon the velvet lounges! There were satins there which could have stood alone; gorgeous moires wrought with bouquets of silver and gold; black laces frosted with silver stars, and bunches of French flowers flashing with jewels. Well might Madame Malsherbes' be called the emporium of fashion. Well might Madame's taste be quoted, and her prices form a nine days' wonder to heathens outside New York!

Mabel's eyes were dazzled as she entered. She handed Madame her package of fleecy-white illusion, and the pearly satin for the under-dress, with a blush on her fair, soft cheek, and gave her directions in a quiet, subdued tone, that contrasted very pleasantly with the French woman's eager volubility.

"Here, Alice," said Madame, summoning a pale, delicate girl to her side. "Here, Alice, you have the best taste of any one in the establishment, and I'll give this into your hands. — So this is your first ball," turning to the Lady Mabel. "Well, I'll see to Alice myself, and I pledge you your dress shall be unexceptionable, if we have to sit up all night for it."

Mabel left the room, and Alice said, timidly, "Please, Mad-

ame, may I take this dress home, and make it? My mother is very sick, and she has no one to stay with her."

"I should be glad to accommodate you, if I could," was the reply;—"but it's impossible, for this dress of Miss Murray's must be finished and taken home to-morrow morning, and I must arrange the trimming myself. You see how it is. Mabel Murray's father is almost the richest man in the city. Mabel is just out of boarding-school, and it would never do to disappoint them about her first ball-dress. Don't say any more, child. I know what's what, and, if I could accommodate you, I would; but I can't, and that ends it."

It was eleven o'clock that night before Alice Griggs was permitted to go home, with a parting injunction from Madame to be back very early in the morning, so as to set the trimmings on Miss Murray's dress, and have it ready to carry home in the forenoon. It was an hour after the usual time, the next day, when Alice entered the shop.

"Hey, Alice, what now? You're behind time," said Madame, sharply.

"My mother is dead!" was the reply, and Alice Griggs burst into a passion of tears.

"Well, well, child, don't cry. I'm sorry, but it can't be helped. Just hurry on those trimmings, and take the dress home; and then, if Lady Mabel don't want it altered, you need not come back again to day."

Two hours after, Alice Griggs stood in the Lady Mabel's elegant room. "Madame said I was to help you try the dress on, Miss, and take it back if it wanted altering."

"Well," and Mabel's little fingers fluttered like a bird, as she smoothed down the rich folds of the satin, and arranged Madame's faultless trimmings of crimson creeper, with its bright green leaves, and long golden stamens.

"O no, it does n't want any altering," she said, in clear, joyous tones; "it is exquisite, perfect!"

"Thank God!" burst involuntarily from the poor seamstress' lips, and Mabel turned to look at her. The girl's delicate limbs trembled, and there were tears in her blue eyes, and Mabel said, very gently, "What is it, Alice, poor child? Don't fear to tell me, if I am a stranger. See, I am a young girl like yourself—I can pity you."

But it was some time before she could persuade the poor girl to relate her sorrowful history. Alice had left her mother very ill the day before. At first, she had refused to go; but her mother had insisted on it, since her engagement with Madame was their only dependence. She had vainly endeavored to persuade Madame to permit her to return, but had obtained no release until eleven. Climbing the tottering stairs, with heart that ached still more wearily than her eyes, she had cried "mother, mother,"—"mother, mother," she had repeated on entering the desolate room, and there, on a heap of straw, lay her mother—cold—stiff—dead! "O God, God!" cried the stricken girl, sinking down on Lady Mabel's velvet carpet, "she died there all, all alone, with not a soul to smooth her dying pillow, or give her a drop of water in her last agony!"

Lady Mabel was just out, otherwise she would have known all this was "nothing new under the sun;" otherwise she would not have suffered it to spoil the pleasure of her first

ball; otherwise she would not have taken the poor Alice to share her palace-home.

Alice Griggs was weak-minded, probably, else she would not have died of grief, as she did, three months after, ever haunted by the terrible vision of her mother's last agony, which no human eye beheld.

Alas! alas! shall such things be? Shall human blood cry ever unappeased toward our Father's throne for vengeance? Shall we robe ourselves "in purple and fine linen," while others, whose faces are as fair, whose limbs are as delicate, as our own must die the slow death of toil and exhaustion, or live to eat the bread of shame? Is there not a day coming when the diamonds in our hair shall burn us like coals of fire, when the flowers on our brow shall be crowns of thorns in the great day of His wrath

A LOVE SONG.

WE met, it was as barks that on the tide of life
Go drifting onwardly, by isles of joy, and strife ;
'T was but a voice from sea, an answer from the shore,
One clasp of kindly hands, and the brief dream was o'er !

I gazed up momentarily into thy dark-blue eyes,
As one who sees in sleep the far-off Paradise ;
I, trembling, bowed my head upon thy broad, calm breast, —
I wept a moment there, in dreams that I was blest.

And yet, those eyes looked coldly down into my own, —
There was no glance of love, no thrilling passion-tone ;
'T was as a flower which pours its worship on a star,
And dies, because it wins no answer from afar !

We met, and my proud heart shall thrill forevermore
With dreams, and memories, aching at its burning core ;
While joy, and hope, shall smile within thy calm blue eyes,
Like moonlight on a pool where sparkling water lies !

I may not speak, and so my earnest woman's heart
Shall proudly guard the dreams that will not hence depart ,
And only in my prayers, with low, half-whispered tone,
Thy name shall tremble up to the Eternal Throne !

THE FIRST QUARREL.

It was the bridal morning of Effie St. Claire, and her mother stole gently in, to breathe a blessing over her for the last time, in the home of her childhood.

It seemed that her sleep had been restless, for the bare arms were tossed like a snow-wreath above her head, and her sunny curls had floated out over the velvet counterpane. There were tears, too, on the long lashes which seemed to cast a shadow over her rose-hued cheeks; and yet, round her lips was beaming a happy smile, and anon those bright lips parted, and on the morning air floated a whisper, "Ernest, dear Ernest!"

Long and silently knelt the mother by her side, with the hot tears streaming through her clasped fingers; for the memories of the past were busy in her soul, as she thought of the untrodden future of that beloved one, who erst had lain beneath her breast.

"Seventeen years have I cherished thee, my darling," she murmured. "O, can another's love ever be so faithful?"

And yet there rose a haunting shadow of self-accusation. Had she not guarded her loved one too tenderly from care? Had she not suffered that proud will to grow strong, and subdue others, when it should have learned to submit? And now no other one could guard her Effie as she had done; and might

there not be clouds about her future, which a mother's hand had helped to weave? Very tenderly she brushed back the long, silken curls, and kissed the fair brow; and, at that gentle caress, Effie St. Claire languidly unclosed her large blue eyes.

"You here, dear mother, so early?" and she pressed the fond hand to her lips.

"Yes, my child," and the mother's voice was very low in its earnest tenderness;—"yes, I came to look on you, as you slept; and, darling, your mother would make one parting request:

"It is this, dear one, that you strive to yield to your husband, and to control your own strong will.

"I have meant it for the best; but now, in this parting hour, my heart is heavy with a fear lest I have made it harder for you to enter on your new relations, by mistaken tenderness. My child, my Effie, forgive your mother!"

"O mother, dearest mother!" pleaded the young girl, "not that word from you to me! Forgive me, rather, for every grief I have ever caused you, and, believe me, I will promise all you wish."

Two hours later, and Effie St. Claire was arrayed for her bridal. Her slight but graceful figure was robed in a pearl-white satin, embroidered with threads of silver, and over it fell the rich folds of a heavily-wrought point-lace veil, fastened on her graceful head with a wreath of orange-flowers, knotted with a string of large seed-pearls.

Very proud was the look of Ernest Ethrington, as he came to her side on his bridal morning.

"Fairer than ever, my beautiful!" he whispered, as he led her

to the parlor, and, bending down, gazed lovingly into her clear blue eyes.

And there, in the sunny flush of the June morning, amid the fragrance of sweet flowers and the hum of bright-winged birds, Effie St. Claire became Effie Ethrington.

Let us look at her again, six months later.

In an elegantly-arranged breakfast-parlor was sitting a graceful and charming woman. Her hair was put back with a pearl comb, and round her lingered the cool beauty of a Grecian statue, as she sat there in her dress of snowy muslin.

On the table was a magnificent breakfast-service of Dresden china, with coffee-urn, salver and cream-jug, all of massive silver. You could recognize our Effie in the lady, notwithstanding that on her brow sat an expression of haughty pride, and the full, red lip was curled almost with an air of defiance. And yet, surely, one could not have wished a nobler-looking companion than the gentleman sitting opposite, with his kind, serious eyes fixed earnestly upon her. Surely no fault could have been found with the fragrant Mocha, or the snow-white roll; and yet she pushed both from her, as she spoke, seemingly in answer to a remonstrance from her husband.

“I tell you, Ernest, I never was crossed at home, and now you would tyrannize over me in this fashion; as if I did not know enough to take care of myself! I must n't associate with Frank Hudson, forsooth!—a vile fellow, you say. Why, there's not a woman in town but would triumph in a smile from him, and you say I shan't associate with him. It's easy to see why; and, indeed, you may well be jealous of those glorious black eyes, and that fascinating manner.”

“Effie,” — and the husband’s mien grew stern and altered, — “Effie, I am not jealous, and I had not even thought of my wife stooping to give me cause; but I have opportunities for knowing Frank Hudson that you cannot have, and, since you do not heed my request, I must command that you shun his society.”

So saying, Ernest Ethrington left his palace-home, and went to his office on Chestnut-street.

Long Effie sat there, weeping bitterly. It was their first quarrel, and she knew it was her fault. Her mother’s words came back to her, and she almost resolved to beg his forgiveness; but her heart was very proud, and three days passed without the exchange of one word of conciliation and repentant tenderness.

On the evening of the third day, Mr. Ethrington returned home, and, seating himself on a low stool, with his face buried in his hands, seemed absorbed in a painful revery.

He was aroused by a stifled sob; and Effie, his Effie, his wife, was kneeling at his feet.

“O, husband!” murmured she, “I have done wrong, — forgive me, hold me to your heart once more, and I will do all you ask!”

“Nay, Effie, my beautiful, forgive me. I have been cold and stern, I fear, forgetting what a flower-wreathed cage had held my birdie, ere she nestled in my bosom. We’ll learn a lesson, both of us, darling. But, look here;” and, opening the evening paper, he pointed to the name of Frank Hudson as arrested for forgery.

Effie shuddered, as she clung closer to her husband, and wept

upon his bosom bitter tears of repentance for their first and last quarrel.

The proud will was subdued ; the warm, loving heart of the true woman was awakened, and the life-woof of Effie Ethrington was braided up with golden threads.

14*

TO A PICTURE OF NATALIE.

“ Her eyes were homes of silent prayer.”

PICTURED saint, in whose deep eyes
Many a psalm and prayer there lies,
Set like stars in twilight skies —

Underneath thy banded hair
Lies a brow so pale and fair,
Angels leave their kisses there.

Pressing on thy dimpled cheek,
With her lips so pure and meek,
Doth the Virgin mother speak

All her love for thee, her child, —
Holy, sainted, undefiled, —
Heart by earth-care ne'er beguiled.

What clime soe'er calls thee its own,
Sunny south or frozen zone,
If heaven hath angels, thou art one! —

Coming in thy mortal guise,
From thy distant Paradise,
Lest thy glory blind our eyes!

SILENCE ADAMS.

AN OLD MAN'S STORY.

“Vergiss die treuen todten nicht.”

DROP, drop, drop,—how wearily the rain falls! What spectres are gliding downward from the weird, dream-haunted past,—the land whose phantom memory-bells are only rung by goblins, whose fateful halls are brooded over by midnight and solemn silence! What shapes of glorious beauty flit through its shadowy aisles! what calm, pale brows, what smiles bright with the prisoned sunshine of a lifetime!

I am an old man now. The hair she used to twine lies above my furrowed brow, like silver-tinted moonbeams; my form is thin and bowed, and these strong arms, with which I used to fold her, are weak and shrivelled; but the fire burns on in my heart,—low down there it glows and sparkles, unquenched, eating away life.

I suppose the world would call me romantic, if they could read the old man's heart, and know that her soul keeps tryst with mine at twilight; and that still, with the chill in my bones, and the frost on my hair, my heart thrills, and my pulses quicken, when I say over, low to myself, the name of Silence Adams.

It is a long time since I have heard any other speak that name; a *long* time, and the dust has settled on her fair, sweet

face. I saw it the other day, when I went alone into the picture-gallery, and drew away the curtain from before a veiled picture, and looked once more on that brow, with the clear, brown eyes below, and the smoothly-parted brown hair above.

I turned away sorrowful, for there is a great gulf between us now; not death only, but time and change. I am an old man now; and she, my one love, went to sleep beneath the roses, with the sunshine of youth bright and warm upon her brow.

I don't know where it was I first saw Silence Adams. Her memory is linked with my infancy, and yet I was by many years the oldest. But I think some angel figure, some guardian face, with pure, pale brow, and clustering curls,—her curls,—must have guarded my infancy, and, as I grew toward boyhood, this angel came on earth, came among mortals, and they called her Silence Adams.

No other name could have been so appropriate, she was so shy, so pale, so spiritual. There seemed a hush and stillness to brood all about her. Her home, even, was quiet as the Ghost's Walk, at Dedlock Hall. It was a calm, fair spot,—one of those old family mansions, which look as if they had stood still for centuries. The trees were all large, and gnarled, and heavy, and very old.

The grass was green and soft as a carpet for the fairies, and the house looked like a fancy some poet-painter had woven out of the clouds at twilight. The Gothic windows were quaintly set in their deep embrasures; the clapboards were gray with moss, or green with ivy; the roofs and gables were high and steep; and over all a tall, straight chimney towered up, steeple

like, and now and then, when the sunbeams crossed it, seemed to nod and look down frowningly.

Inside, the mansion was even more appropriate, in seeming, for the name and character of its goddess. The furniture was all quaint and old, but in the most careful state of preservation. The carpets were of dark, rich colors, over which the sunshine fell, through the latticed windows, with a tempered radiance. The chairs were of solid mahogany, with the fantastically-wrought cushions of our grandmothers' days.

The tables loomed up, in a kind of polished grandeur, so dark, and smooth, and glossy, as readily to inspire a child with a kind of "you must not touch it" feeling; and even the Canary in its gilded cage was a civil, well-behaved Canary, and never sang when there were visitors.

I can well remember the kind of awe with which I used to be inspired, as I stole, with noiseless footfall, into the halls of Oakwood, in my early boyhood, — the broad, spacious drawing-room, the curiously-carved furniture, and, more than all, the two old people who sat on either side of the broad chimney-piece.

I hardly think I ever imagined that they were not as much part and parcel of the furniture at Oakwood Hall as the chairs and tables. Indeed, I am impressed with a conviction that an order to the upholsterer, had I been reproducing Oakwood, would have commenced much in this wise :

"Please send me two very nice old people, with corresponding arm-chairs. Let the lady be fair and neat, with a black silk gown, and smooth muslin neckerchief. Let the crown of her cap be high and stiff, and the silver hair be smooth upon her forehead.

“Let the old gentleman’s wig be nicely powdered, make his knee-buckles the brightest in the world, and place beside him an ivory-headed cane.”

Such was the home where Silence Adams lived with her grandparents,—at least, such it rises to my memory’s eye. I cannot remember when I commenced to love her; only, as I have said, she, or one like her, watched over me in infancy, and I think the love must have been born with me.

I used to go stealing into Oakwood every night at sunset, to make my best bow to the old people, and then seek Silence in her favorite retreat, the garden. This latter place partook strongly of the general character of the estate. The trees were as still, and proper, and sober, as old people at church-time. The very flowers seemed to have been selected with an eye to good behavior. There were the sedate and matronly sun-flowers; good old-fashioned four-o’clocks, regular in their hours as an old-maid’s tea-drinking; quiet lilies of the valley, mignonette, and large, bright-eyed English violets. There were no flaunting dahlias, no gaudy tulips, in Oakwood garden.

The flowers were all in the highest degree respectable; and, if they had been going to have a dance, it would have been the stately minuet of Queen Elizabeth, and not by any possibility the detestable polka and Schottishe, that so vulgarize our modern drawing-rooms.

In the midst of this garden was a kind of summer-house, embowered with roses. Here Silence was wont to spend the long, warm summer. Here she lived and dreamed. On the little rustic table lay her guitar, her work-box, and a few books I had given her.

Hither it was that I bent my steps one summer evening, when Silence Adams had grown up, from a child, into a calm, quiet, beautiful maiden of fifteen. I seemed, however, to look upon her as a child still, for I was six years her senior; and yet, I remember, my heart fluttered a little, as I caught the gleam of her white robe floating out of the little summer-house.

I went in and sat down by her side, lightly running my fingers over her guitar.

I had just graduated from college, and was soon to leave for a tour on the continent. I had brought Silence a little ring, and a golden cross, to wear for my sake when I was far away, and I had come to give them to her.

I entered very quietly, so quietly that Silence did not look up. Her small white hands were clasped over her pure face, and through them tears were trickling, one by one. I went up to her, and, putting my arm about her waist, whispered, "Silence—dear little Silence!"

Something in my manner, perhaps my addressing her as the little child I had always considered her, reassured the weeping girl; and when I took her hands from her face, she looked up, and the calm, truthful eyes beamed on me, through their tears, with an expression I shall never forget, until the grass grows green above my heart.

That moment I learned, for the first time, that I loved Silence Adams, as a man should love the elect woman, whom he chooses, from among all others, to walk with him through life, till death. Man as I believed myself to be, I know my voice trembled when I asked, "Do you love me, Silence?"

“ Yes, William,” was the calm, innocent reply ; “ I have loved you this long while, longer than I can remember ! ”

Had she, too, that strange feeling, I asked myself, as if our love was born with her, and then I said,

“ But, Silence, you love others, — Mary Lewis ; your grandparents. Do you love me more than them ? ”

An expression of half perplexity crossed her truthful features, and for a moment she seemed rapt in communion with her own heart. Then she placed her hand in mine, and said, still very calmly,

“ Yes, William, I am sure I love you more than all of them, — more even than my dead mother in heaven, I love you.”

Surely those three words, “ I love you,” never before conveyed to human heart such an undoubted assurance of happiness ; but she was calm, and I restrained myself still, while I asked, once more,

“ But, Silence, do you understand me ? It is as a wife I love you. Are you willing to give up all others, and be mine only — to live for me, as I will live for you ? ”

I dare not write the dear girl’s answer. I dare not even say it over to myself, after all this lapse of years.

I held her there, with her brown head lying upon my breast, till the moon and stars rose up and smiled on our betrothal. Then I placed upon her little finger the ring I had brought, hung the golden cross about her neck, and walked slowly homeward.

It would be vain to attempt to describe the heaven of joy and peace which permeated my soul. Another life had grown into mine. God had sent me an angel, to walk over these trouble-

some life-paths, hand-in-hand with me, to heaven! O, how fervent was my prayer of thanksgiving, as I knelt at my window, with the rich, silvery moonlight falling over me like a blessing! When I woke in the morning, my great joy at first seemed dim and indistinct, and then the full realization of it broke over me as gloriously as the sunshine over earth.

There was but one thought to dim its brightness. Silence could not go with me to Europe. She could not leave her aged grandparents, and I must go alone, and claim her upon my return.

I hurried over to Oakwood early in the morning, just to tell my fair betrothed the good news, that, by taking a horseback ride of twenty miles to New York that day, in order to secure my passage, I could remain at home for a fortnight longer. Two weeks, or "fourteen days," as Silence chose to call it. They seemed a little eternity of joy to both of us, and my heart was very light when I kissed Silence a cheerful good-by, telling her I should probably remain in New York that night, and she would see me again the next morning.

All that day my spirits were at high tide. I transacted my business, chatted gayly with my friends, and a little before night, tired as I was, I started to ride homeward, for I longed to look into my darling's brown eyes; and I thought to her the surprise could not fail to be a pleasant one.

On I dashed, over bushes, stones, and hills; but the path seemed all flowers to me. I reached home just after moonrise, and, giving my horse to a servant, started myself for Oakwood, forgetting, in my lover-like impetuosity, that I had need of food or rest.

I had nearly reached the little bower which had, the night before, witnessed our solemn troth-plight, when the thought struck me that it would be pleasant to go on the other side, where the boughs were thick, and take a peep at my darling's sweet face before letting her know I was there. It was a lover's fancy; I thought I could tell if she were thinking of me, and whether she was sad or happy.

Quietly I stole round the other side of the bower, and, cautiously pulling aside the grape-leaves, looked in! * * * *

The blood freezes in my veins, even now, at the remembered horror of that moment. I recall everything distinctly; through years of agony, there was not an instant in which I could forget.

Silence was there, lovely, beautiful as ever, and by her side a man young and handsome, with raven curls, and large, laughing black eyes. He was in the undress of a military officer, and the sword he had unbuckled from his side lay on the grass beside him.

His arms clasped my Silence, her head lay quietly upon his breast, and, as he pressed his lips to her brow, I—yes, I, her betrothed lover!—heard her murmur,

“I had not thought to see you again so soon, Henri, dearest. O, to see you and be so happy! Thank God!”

How could she, false and perjured as she was, dare to take God's name upon her lips, I asked myself, as I turned away, shuddering. How I got home I cannot tell, but I have a confused recollection of biting my lips till they frothed with blood, and tearing out great locks of hair in my solitary walk, to and fro, through the house, that mad, weary night of agony.

I was calm enough in the morning, I remember. I arranged

my toilet with the nicest care, and remarked, very carelessly, when I met the family at breakfast, that I had concluded to go from home to-day, after all, since I thought it would look better to see a little more of my own country before crossing the seas. My father, devoted to his chocolate and his newspaper, scarcely heeded me at all; and my step-mother, whatever she may have thought, said nothing.

After breakfast was over, I went to my room, and wrote a note to Silence. I remember every word of that cruel mis-sive, as distinctly as if I had penned it but yesterday. It ran thus:

“MISS ADAMS: Perhaps it may give you some satisfaction to learn that, in compliment to you, I returned from New York last night, instead of this morning, as I at first intended. I went over to Oakwood, and, in the natural indulgence of a lover’s curiosity, was a witness of the pleasant scene in your favorite bower. I presume it will be an occasion of heartfelt rejoicing to you to know that you are quite free from all the ties which have bound you to

Your humble servant,

“WILLIAM CARLTON.”

In an hour my messenger returned, bringing with him a note from Silence. O, what a pretty, graceful little note it was! Such a dainty envelope, and such an exquisite little hand! Despising Silence in my heart, as I surely did, the note yet seemed dear to me, in a certain sense, for it was the first one from her whom I had hoped to call my wife; and I could not make up my mind to return it, so I tossed it, unopened, in the bottom of

my trunk, and left the town, without even a parting glance at Oakwood.

Crossing the ocean was not then, by any means, the easy, hasty thing it is now. It was like making a long and pleasant visit at a friend's house.

I had plenty of leisure, while at sea, to think of Silence Adams; but I was proud, and not even to myself would I acknowledge my disappointment.

But still I must confess there was a voice low down in my heart which kept saying her name over and over; and very often her calm, fair face would come between me and the blue eyes of Carrie Stanley, a sweet-voiced English girl.

Friendships are formed quicker at sea than on land; and a week had not elapsed, ere, in a moment of insanity, I had besought Carrie Stanley to become my betrothed bride. She would have brought me broad lands as her dower, and a face fair as our dreams of heaven; and yet, God knows, Silence was my one love, even then. Carrie was calmly, tranquilly dear, but never, for one moment, did my heart thrill to word or look of hers as it had done to the lightest tone of Silence Adams.

We were yet many leagues from shore, when Carrie, my fair orphan Carrie, sickened and died, with her head lying upon my breast. The sunshine of heaven seemed to break upon her vision ere she departed, and, pressing my hand to her lips, she whispered, "I am being translated into the ineffable glory. You will follow me some time into this great Peace."

She died without a struggle, and round her lips lingered, even in death, that smile kindled by the dawning light of Paradise.

I heard them say, "We commit this, our sister, unto the deep!" A sullen splash, and all was over; and yet I do not think I mourned her.

I had never loved her with a human passion. She seemed rather some beautiful angel I had met in dreams. If there was loneliness at my heart as we heaved in sight of the English shore, the name to which the aching chords thrilled was not Carrie's.

Three years had passed. It was the early Italian spring, and I sat alone in my pleasant villa at sunny Florence. I had travelled over many lands; gazed in blue eyes, black eyes and gray eyes; flirted with the phlegmatic German, the lively Frenchwoman, and the Italian with her lustrous eyes and her voice of music. And yet but one name was on my lips, but one face was in my heart, as I sat there dreaming in the hazy glow of the southern sunset,—the name, the face of Silence Adams.

I thought of that strange love which seemed born with me; of the destiny which had linked our fates together; of the halls of Oakwood, and the night on which we murmured our troth-pledge. She seemed to rise before me, in her youth and beauty, as I saw her then. I could see the very flutter of her white robe, and catch the music of her voice, as she murmured, "I love you, William!"

And then came that other memory, crushing, and stern, and terrible.

But — had I not wronged her? It was the first time I had

ever asked myself this question — the first time I had ever admitted to myself such a possibility.

I rose hurriedly, and, tumbling to the floor the varied contents of my trunk, clutched eagerly that note — fair and pure, and closely sealed, still. I read it, not with a burst of tears, but with a frozen heart, and eyes starting from their sockets. Silence was pure, pure as heaven!

It is a long way back now, and I'll try to explain it all calmly, as she did in that little note.

The poor child's mother, ardent, beautiful and enthusiastic, had incurred the everlasting displeasure of her parents by marrying, for love, a poor but handsome navy officer. He had proved to be dissipated and unworthy of her, but she still clung to him with all a woman's truth, and followed him from place to place with her little Henry, until, five years after the birth of this idolized child, Herbert Leslie was shot in a duel.

The next day Silence was born. There was but rude nursing at the barracks, and no gentle tones of kindness. The one voice, which would even now have been music to the poor mother's ears, was hushed in death, and all around was cold, and calm, and very still.

"Let her be called *Silence*," whispered the mother to the grim, hard-featured nurse standing at the bed's foot — "Silence Adams;" and then those thin lips seemed to move in prayer for a few moments, and — Silence Adams was motherless!

Her grandparents heard of their daughter's death, and of the helpless babe, and came to claim her; but the boy bore his father's face, and looked at them with his father's eyes, and they

drove him from their presence; nor could any persuasions induce them to admit him to Oakwood.

When Silence grew older, Henry made himself known to her; and she, with so few to love, had lavished upon him a tenderness which was almost idolatry. He had bound her by a solemn oath to conceal from every human ear her knowledge of him; and she dared not reveal it, even to me, without his consent. I had surprised them at one of their stolen interviews, just as she had succeeded in obtaining his permission to reveal these facts to her betrothed.

“And now, William,” thus the note concluded, “now that you know all, dearest, you will hasten to me, will you not, and take back all those cruel words? O! William, William, if I thought them true, I do believe my poor heart would break.”

Yes, Silence was pure, pure as heaven; and I—O, God, could it be that I should yet be forgiven? There was hope in the very thought. I placed the priceless note in my bosom, collected my effects hurriedly together, and travelled post-haste for Liverpool. The seventh day from that time saw me embark for America.

O, how impatiently I trod the good ship's deck! how I prayed for gales, tempests, anything that might bear us more swiftly on our way! Hours seemed like months, and days like weary ages, until, sailing thus o'er the calm blue sea, as in other days, there came to me a vision of the lost Caroline.

Her brow was as fair as ever, her eyes were as bright, but calmer than of yore. It seemed that about her was floating the very radiance of that ineffable glory.

It may have been but a dream. I dare not think it was

more ; but, in the calm, silent night, she seemed to stand beside me, and lay her cool hand upon my brow. She spoke — but it seemed like the voice of a soul, and the bright lips were motionless.

“Beloved,” she whispered, “I have come to warn you. Human hearts must suffer. Perfect peace comes only when we are absorbed in the Infinite. There is many a path before you where the flowers beneath your feet will turn to thorns, and where no cool water lies. But be patient, O my beloved ! If the great good comes not on earth, will it not go before you to heaven ?”

And the dream, the vision, passed away, and my soul came back to this earthly life, with a murmur on my lips — “Yes, in heaven.”

Ah ! I have had need to say it over many times !

After that, I grew calm and patient, and only whispered the name of my beloved in prayers.

At last my feet touched the shore. I had no time to gaze up to the blue sky, or down to the green earth ; there was not even time for my soul to thrill to the joy of seeing my native land. I hurried restlessly onward. It was midsummer afternoon when I reached my father’s gate, and, once more throwing the reins to the servant, hurried over the fields to Oakwood.

I could see it in the distance. Its turrets looked grand, and calm, and still, at even. And Silence, would she be there to greet me ?

Could she forgive me ? What justification could I plead for my great wrong ? Suddenly my heart stood still. I grasped the limb

of a willow that hung drooping in my path for support, and I looked resolutely towards Oakwood.

Merciful God! was that a funeral procession which was coming through the gates, as if to meet me? That coffin with its waving pall, those girls robed in white, scattering flowers!

How madly I hurried on! They set the coffin down in front of the gateway, after the manner of country funerals.

Slowly they turned back the pall. Slowly they lifted the lid, and madly I hurried onward.

They gave way before my coming, as if they had seen a spectre, and I gained the spot.

For one moment I veiled my eyes, and then I glanced downward. It was Silence! — my Silence — cold, still, dead!

O, Heaven, how beautiful she looked there! The blue-veined lids were closed over the brown eyes I had so loved to gaze into; but the brown hair lay above her brow as of old, soft, and fair, and very smooth.

The village girls had placed white roses on her breast, and there, above her white robe, above the cold, pulseless heart, lay the golden cross I had given her!

Silence! my own, my beautiful! faithful in death, as in life!

Was the love passionate and earthly which forced me to press such wild, beseeching kisses upon her brow and lips, which made my hot tears fall over her like a rain of molten lava? O, why, why did they not waken her? "Silence!" I shrieked, "Silence!" but there came no answer from the lips that had always before welcomed my coming. "Silence!" and still the fair, sweet,

almost mocking smile rested on those beautiful features. It drove me mad.

I did not know whether I followed her to the grave. I did not know even where they laid my beautiful; but, when my overthrown reason came tottering back again, I found myself with the old people, her grandparents, who were forgetting their grief in earnest strivings to lighten my wilder sorrow.

They were gathered to their fathers long ago, and Oakwood is mine now.

Her brother dwells here with me, — her brother and his sweet young wife, — and their fair children play at my feet; but I do not envy him.

My wife is waiting for me above; and, as surely as I die, God has mercifully given me faith that I shall rise again, and go home to heaven and to her; for, when I depart, will not the last name on my lips be SILENCE ADAMS!

ONLY A PAUPER.

OVER the stony street of the great city the iron-shod car rattled onward, bearing the rude, hastily-constructed hearse.

The coffin was narrow, and rather short, and the sexton's lip curled slightly, as, in answer to our half-whispered inquiry, he muttered, "Only a pauper!" The form within was very slight and fair, the features delicate and purely classical in their outline, the mouth like a frozen rosebud, and forth from the coarse cap had strayed one long, sunny curl, which fond hands long ago must have nurtured carefully.

But there was no funeral train to go to the pauper burial; only the sullen hearse-driver and the two bearers, with the brutal, stupid leer on their coarse faces.

No long array of coaches wheeled along in stately grandeur, with the black plumes nodding their solemn mockery over the horses' heads!

There was no silver plate, or sculptured marble, on which to write out the sanctified lies of an epitaph; no parson to say his prayer, or clerk to breathe amen's, as they lowered the dead woman to her nameless grave. Therefore the sexton's lip curled; therefore he answered me, "Only a pauper!"

Was this, indeed, all? Had life for her no deeper destiny? Were there no eyes which brightened at the light in her own, no broad breast where her head might lean, no child's voice to call

her mother? Had no father's lips ever blessed her, no mother's hand parted the sunshine of her flowing curls? O, yes! Once a sweet country home had echoed back her laugh, a deep voice had whispered lovingly in her ear, and her sleep had grown sweet with a small head pillowed on her bosom. But father and mother had long lain sleeping; the sod had grown over his broad breast; and, for the child, the gaunt, half-famished thing was whipped for crying, and told it was no use for her to go to the pauper funeral.

As for souls, does anybody know whether paupers have such an article? Hers must have been safe enough; or, if it were not, who cared? — *she was only a pauper!*

HOME AGAIN.

RYEFIELD, next station! "Hurra! It seems good to get into a Christian country once more, after a three-years' camping out among California savages. I declare, I wonder if Kate has n't just got supper ready!"

"Hurra, there, Mr. Conductor! just shove out my baggage; I'm off here!" And, sure enough, he hurries home at the rate of two locomotives tied together.

"Kate! Kate! I say, little wife, where are you?" and he looks through the window. "Whew! — w-h-e-w! if that is n't comfortable! — There sits Katie with a handsome young man. In a blue dress, too; the gypsy always knew she looked prettiest in blue; — and those earrings, too, confound the woman! I wonder where she gets money to dash out with, when I am digging away in California! Taking her hand now! Sathanos, what will come next? May you go to — Kate, God bless you, darling! — Kate! I say, Kate!" and he raised his voice a little.

"My husband!" and the prettiest white arms in the world are round his neck, the rosiest lips pressed to his own, and over the bright black eyes close long, jetty lashes, heavy with tears!

I don't know how it was, but by this time the husband's heart was softened considerably. It might have been owing to the influence of a certain other heart, beating and throbbing against

his own; but it's certain he gave the handsome young fellow, his wife's youngest brother, a cordial welcome, and sat down with his good humor not at all diminished by the sight of nicely-browned biscuits and smoking tea-cakes.

A handsome man, with a slightly sunburned face, sat, in the afternoon train toward Slingsby, leaning his head on his hand. He had been for three years a wanderer, and come home rich. Rich! there's a great deal in that word, to most. To him there was everything! The proud man had seen his delicate wife, reared in luxury, reduced to privation, and she suffered, and complained not; but it maddened him. He left her on a crusade for gold, — left her with a weary memory dwelling in his soul of clinging arms, and passionate kisses. The deep, bright eyes of their one child, their almost angel Florence, looked on him in his dreams sometimes, and he heard the last tear-choked "God bless you!" from his young wife's lips.

Not for many a weary month has he heard tidings from home; and there were tears in the deep eyes that shone from underneath his slouched Spanish hat, as he hurried from the Slingsby dépôt.

The roses were bright around the porch of that little fairy cottage, the woodbine was green over it, and forth from tufts of mignonette and hearts-ease floated a faint, delicate breath of perfume. But where were his wife's blue eyes, where the sunshine of Florence's golden hair? He hurried in; there was no sound of life, and the pale, thin figure lying on the couch, with the golden-fringed lids drooping heavily over the blue eyes, can that be Jennie, — his Jennie? It must be. — "Jennie, sweet





THE RETURNED CALIFORNIAN

wife!" and the words burst from his heart like a low wail. The lids unclose, — the ripe lips part, — and then she sinks in his arms in a fainting fit, almost like death.

A half-hour later, and he held her on his breast, murmuring low words of love, blent with vows never again to part on earth. "But Florence, our Florence!" he asked, at last; "where is she?"

"Dead, dearest, dead!" and the young wife clung to him convulsively. "Dead!" and the word swelled on his ear like the wail from a broken heart.

Yes, there was life and light on earth, and the great world recked not that the grass grew green over that child-heart, that the violets nodded above those closed eyes, and that only dirges were the husband's welcome home!

Ah me! can gold pay for the wasted wealth of the heart? Can the gleam of gems shine out of memory the tears that sparkle in the eyes we love; or velvet spreads, enwrought with gold and pearl, warm us like the clasp of clinging arms which hold us to a heart that beats for us only?

ONLY AN OLD MAID.

No, no, nothing but that! She has never derived any additional importance from linking her name with yours, imperial man!—never grown angelized by a wife's thrice-drugged potion of care and sorrow. She lives alone, in a little, lonely house,—alone, with her black cat, and her memories of the past!

For even she has past memories; you can't deprive her of those. Sitting in her quiet room, with the black cat purring at her feet, voices steal to her from the olden time,—dreams and loves, vague, and dim, and distant, from the lost paradise of Life!

Sunshine streams again over the broad green meadows of her child-life; sunshine lies on the tufts of fresh red strawberries, and browns the small fingers that clasp her own. She wanders over hill, and dell, and woodland, with young, happy hearts beating at her side, opening such golden leaves in her book of destiny as make her eye brighten with the twin lights of youth and hope!

And then the pale shadow-hands of spirits lift the curtain from before a veiled picture.

The old maid gazes once more into "bonny wells of eyes," brushes back long, fair curls, and holds her breath while a low voice breathes her name!

Dead or false!—which was he? Who shall tell? It was a

gay, glad morning, when she saw him last, as he stood on a proud ship's deck, and waved his hand in fond farewell. What years she hoped, and waited! — but he never came again. Did he hold some Eastern beauty to his heart, or was the sea-sand draggling in his long, bright curls? Who shall say? Only the voice of the recording angel, in that day when the sea gives up its dead!

But she hoped and waited, and she is an old maid now, — a lonely, loveless old maid. Young misses, who are just out of school, and into market, sneer at her, pursing up their dainty little lips.

Young men, who exult in long, silky moustaches, and bandit-looking whiskers, look at her patronizingly, and call her "the old girl." Married ladies, who quarrel with their lords half the twenty-four hours, and gossip about their neighbors the other half, condescend to pity her, and she, — O, she gropes along graveward, and doesn't mind!

True, those eyes grow dim with tears sometimes, as she looks on shapes from the spectre-land of the past; but she chokes them all back again. Tears are romantic in the eyes of beauty, but, reddening the old maid's peaked nose, they are stuff and nonsense!

Ridiculous of her it is, you say, to wear those stiff, short curls. You forget it may be because he liked them.

You call her a winter-rose, dried and withered, when you see her in her bright shawl; but it was his last gift.

To me there is something beautiful in the eternity of a love which triumphs over time and death; but, alas! I can't make the old maid a heroine in any eyes but my own.

This is merely because I cannot make her young and beautiful ; because she will train those winter curls like tendrils of the spring ; because, with her love and hope in heaven, she is in the world, and not of the world.

She must live on alone ; drink her tea out of her little, old-fashioned tea-pot ; eat her marmalade out of her little, old-fashioned dessert-plates, and, by and by, lay her down to die, and be followed to her grave only by her black cat, and —

ELLEN LOUISE.

LENORE.

HUSH thy foot-fall, lightly tread,
Passing by a loved one's bed !
Dust hath gathered on her brow,
Silently she sleepeth now !

Sank she unto dreamless rest,
Clasping violets to her breast,
With her forehead pale and fair
'Neath the midnight of her hair.

And the sunshine, wandering by,
Paused a while to see her die ; —
Stealing with a silent tread,
Wove a glory round her head.

Angels, bending from the skies,
Gently closed her dimming eyes, —
Kissing then her lips so fair,
Left an Eden smiling there !

Then we laid her down to sleep,
Where the wild-flowers bend and weep ;
Earth below, and blue sky o'er,
Sweetly sleeps our own Lenore !

SEPULCHRES.

I WONDER if there is any human heart which has not its own grave-yard, — its tombs, and monuments, and haunted houses — its sepulchres, from which the buried hopes come out at midnight, like sheeted ghosts?

There be coffins of gold, and coffins of silver; and there lie dead bodies, white and ghastly, wrapped only in winding-sheets of pride.

Sometimes memory-bells toll over the unquiet sleepers, and other hopes and loves say a solemn mass for the repose of the dead. But yet the spectres will come out upon the "Ghost's Walk;" and though, in the careless day-time, we can pass them by with a "God bless you," such as the Swedes give to a sneezing traveller, in the night they do lay cold hands upon our brows, and startle us strangely, making us close our eyes against the vision, and mutter prayers and Ave Marias!

There be often grave-yards, — solemn ones, — behind holy country churches, where the dead go to sleep within the sound of the organ on holy-days and festivals, and the harmonies of the church-choirs singing together. There be crosses and monuments over them, which the country people twine round with wreaths and garlands, and there the village sexton says, "The dead sleep well!"

There be others still, in the great city, where the dome frowns

over them, and the mighty shadow of Saint Paul's falls over the passing traveller like a spell.

There, above hearts that once were quick with life, are strange shapes of mighty warriors in bronze and marble, gleaming swords, and the presence of a brooding human pride.

We can look on them calmly; for never do the graves open, never do the warriors in bronze and marble totter on their pedestals, and the church-clock ticks in their presence, and the church-bell rings!

But the sepulchres in the grave-yards of our hearts have yawning mouths, and from them comes silently many a Lazarus, with a frown upon his brow. There is no power, no spell, to lay the spirit. Star-beam and moon-beam stream in vain over the sepulchres of our hearts, — the shrines and altars where are only the ashes of desolation!

SWEET ELLEN ADAIR.

“ Ellen Adair, she loved me well,
 Against her father's and mother's will ;
To-day I sat for an hour and wept
 By Ellen's grave on the windy hill.
Shy she was, and I thought her cold —
 Thought her proud, and fled over the sea ;
Filled was I with folly and spite,
 When Ellen Adair was dying for me.

“ Cruel, cruel were the words I said,
 Cruelly came they back to-day ;
' You 're too slight and fickle,' I said,
 ' To trouble the heart of Edward Gray.'
There I put my face in the grass —
 Whispered, ' Listen to my despair ;
I repent me of all I did,
 Speak a little, Ellen Adair !'

“ Then I took a pencil and wrote,
 On a mossy stone as I lay,
' Here lies the body of Ellen Adair ;
 And here the heart of Edward Gray !'
Love may come, and love may go,
 And fly like a bird from tree to tree,
But *I* will love no more, no more,
 Till Ellen Adair comes back to me !” TENNYSON.

I AM sitting here alone, in my old maid's room. The sunshine drifts pleasantly in at the windows ; the orioles and robins

have built their nests in the trees that overshadow my eaves ; the cool breeze lifts my silver hair lightly, and I am happy, with a strange, quiet blessedness.

Voices come to me from bright, young lips, that were long ago laid to rest beneath the grave-yard turf. White, dimpled hands are clasping mine, and I am wandering again with those beloved dead, over the enchanted paths of my childhood.

Once more we gather strawberries in the meadows, or go nutting in the still haunts of the woodland.

And among those buried friends and loves there is one face fairer than all, — a quiet, calm, spiritual face ; clear chestnut eyes, overshadowed by glossy chestnut hair — the hair, the eyes, of Ellen Adair ! I met one like her, in Charlestown, a few weeks since, one as fair almost as she was ; and Ellen Adair rose up again before me, pure, fresh and lovely.

It is but a few days since I sat underneath the beech-tree by the garden wall, with a living friend beside me, — one who, for many years, seemed to me as a brother,—and I listened to a tale of those other days, of which I will tell you here in the pages of this old book, this memoir of my youth, which I shall leave behind me for my nephews and nieces to read, when I too have gone to the land of shadows.

My pet namesake came to me, the other day, with her sweet face wearing an unusually grave expression, and asked me, very earnestly, “Aunt Louise, you are an old maid, an't you ?”

“Yes, dear,” I answered, nothing daunted.

“Well, Aunt Louise, did anybody ever want to marry you ?”

“You shall know when I am dead, darling,” was my reply; and the sweet questioner left me with tearful eyes.

O, blessed be God for love! It is a blessed thing to be thus dear to Gertrude’s children, even though no childish voice can ever call me mother, no small, rose-dimpled hand ever rest upon my bosom. Yes, they will read the history of my poor heart’s loves and hopes, when I am dead; and then, too, they may read the story of Ellen Adair, in these leaves out of my diary!

I can just remember the first time I saw her. It had been rumored about, in our village, that a new family had moved into the neighborhood; and of course their children, more or less, would attend our next term of school. The first day of school is always, like the last one, an important occasion; there is the new teacher to criticize, the new scholars to get acquainted with, and the new rules to listen to.

I remember this day was a particularly important one to me, for it was the first time I wore my new pink dress, and that little new white apron.

School-girls can generally afford to be generous enough to admire what belongs to another, and my dress and apron elicited their due share of approval ere I commenced to watch the gravelled walk leading from Mr. Adair’s (the new neighbor’s) front-door, and “wonder” how many new scholars would come.

At last the door opened, and one little girl came out all alone. She left the yard, crossed the street, and came up to the school-house. As she approached, the scholars all looked at the shy, pale, delicate little creature, in her sky-blue muslin frock, with an air of not unkind curiosity; but they all withdrew as she

entered. I was about to follow them, when another glance at her timid, appealing face determined me to remain.

I approached her very gently (thinking, I remember, that my pink dress and white apron might serve to assist me in making a favorable impression), and asked if I should show her where to put her bonnet.

"Thank you," she said, gently — "I don't know any one here; will you please to tell me what your name is?"

"Louise Cleveland," I answered, with a smile, quite delighted at finding her so easy to get acquainted with. "Louise Cleveland, — and yours?"

"O, I am Ellen Adair."

"Ellen Adair," I repeated; "it is a sweet name, and I mean to love you very much, — may I?"

Her answer was a kiss; and from that hour she was my other self, a part of my very existence.

In the play-ground I was her champion, and in the languages her guide and assistant; while she repaid me by lending me the advantage of her unusual quickness in mathematics, for which her love amounted almost to a passion.

Strange as this love seemed to me then, now that I think of it, it seems not quite so singular, for hers was a mathematical character, — about her every act there was a kind of mathematical precision, — and her ideas of right and wrong were as thoroughly grounded on the plummet-and-line system as if every act were the solution of a problem in geometry.

For years our friendship continued to glide along in the same uninterrupted channel, when at length a stranger came to disturb the current of Ellen Adair's peaceful life. I have met,

during my long life, many persons whom to see was to admire, but I never met one whose first appearance was so irresistibly impressive as that of Edward Gray.

He was a young man of brilliant talents, and of rare promise in his chosen profession, the law ; but he was poor, and in debt for his education, and this seemed to close against him many of the hospitable doors of Rye-field, and, among others, that of the aristocratic Colonel Adair.

But he soon became a warm friend of my brother Frank, and a frequent visitor at my father's house.

Of course, Ellen soon met him there ; and it seemed to me, from the first, that they were made for each other. When I introduced them, Edward bent upon the delicate girl a glance of intense, almost passionate admiration ; and she — but it was not possible for any one to see Edward Gray without an involuntary admission of his superiority.

He was about the medium height, with a full chest, strong arms, and firmly-knit muscles. His forehead was broad and prominent, and over it hung thick curls of coal-black hair ; while beneath his heavy brows flashed eyes so black, so large, so glorious, that to meet them was almost to adore them. His manners were faultless ; and his voice (as if a woman ever could forget that) was clear, and deep, and musical. He said but little, except when he was particularly interested, and then forth from his lips would burst a whole flood-tide of eloquent words, swaying you like the sea.

It was a quiet summer evening when they first met. The trees waved their giant arms between them and the blue sky, spangled with stars. Beneath their feet was the cool, soft grass,

and around them the balmy air of the summer evening, laden with moonbeams. Ellen and I were in the garden, and Edward Gray joined us, with my brother Frank.

After that they met quite often, and soon I learned that a passion new and absorbing had taken possession of my sweet friend.

When she told me of it, with tears and blushes, she made me promise to guard the secret in my own heart; and never did I breathe it to mortal, until roses were growing over her pure brow.

“He will never love me,” she cried, amid her tears, as she ceased her narration. “He could not, Louise, I am so small, and plain, and foolish. Louise, you know he could never love me, and don’t you despise me for loving him?”

“No, indeed, darling. Why should I? I thought, from the first, that you were made for each other, and the wonder would be if you did not love him. I am sure, dearest, he can’t help loving you; nay, I think he does already.”

Nor was I wrong, for the very next day Edward himself came to me with a tale of love for my sweet Ellen, and in a similar manner made me promise to preserve silence. So here was I in possession of a secret whose disclosure would have made two hearts happy, and which, yet, I was bound in honor not to reveal. Was there ever a more difficult position for a woman to be placed in? O, how my tongue did ache! Had he better tell Ellen now, was Edward’s concluding question, or should he wait? Tell her now, by all means, I advised.

Always before, when Ellen had spent the evening with us, my brother Frank had attended her home; but the next time she

came, Frank was not there, and I thought Edward was not sorry to have the opportunity. I watched them depart, talking gayly, and then I reentered the house, and sat there building air-castles as usual, when, half an hour later, Edward entered.

“What! you back here again, and so soon?” I exclaimed, as he approached; but instantly I saw something unusual had disturbed him.

“Yes, I am back here,” he replied; “and I’d better not have left here, unless I wished to get insulted gratuitously.”

“Why, Edward, what do you mean? Surely, Nellie has n’t rejected you?”

“No, I have not given her the opportunity.”

“Well, for mercy’s sake, what is it, then? Who, in the name of common sense, has been insulting you?”

“Well, listen, Lou; you may as well know it first as last, and I’ll tell you. I walked home with Ellen Adair, simpleton that I was. I thought I had never been so happy in my life as when her little hand rested confidently, I almost dared to think lovingly, on my arm. I was telling her of my past, of my poverty and my struggles, and perhaps in five minutes more I should have asked her to become the arbiter of my future, when we arrived at the door of her father’s house, and there was Colonel Adair himself standing at the gate.

“‘This is Mr. Gray, father, who has come home with me from Louise Cleveland’s,’ said Ellen, timidly; and then, turning to me, she added, ‘Won’t you come in, sir?’

“Before I had time to reply, the colonel remarked,

“‘It is already time for prayers, and retiring. I am much obliged to the gentleman for taking you safely home, though I

should prefer you would always let me know where you are going, that I may have a servant sent for you.'

"'Good-night, sir,' said Ellen, gently. 'Good-evening,' said the colonel, in his most polite and frigid manner; and your humble servant, Edward Gray, bowed his head and left."

"Yes, Edward," said I, laughing merrily at his description, "you are proving how very humble you are, by your present resentment of an affair no one else would have thought of construing into an insult. I suppose that the colonel thought Ellen had never met you before,—did n't exactly approve of a stranger gallant, and probably thought it was time for young people to be in bed, that was all,—so run home, sir, get a good sleep, and come over to escort Ellen home in better season to-morrow night."

However, I ascertained, the next day, that there was more in the affair than my philosophy had dreamed of. It seemed the colonel had been for some time mistrusting his daughter's increasing regard for Edward Gray, and had determined to improve the first opportunity of expressing his disapprobation.

After prayers, he had called her to him, and firmly, calmly told her that, if she married Edward Gray, she would henceforth be no child of his; and that the less a young lady associated on intimate terms with a gentleman she could not marry, the better would be her reputation.

Poor Ellen came to me, in great affliction, the next morning. She was almost, nay, quite certain, that Edward loved her, from his remarks, as he walked home by her side; and, if he asked her love in return, what should she do?

"If he loves you, and you love him," I answered, "and you

believe him good and true and noble, marry him, and make his life happy."

Reader, I suppose my advice was very wrong, but it was the judgment of an inexperienced girl, deeply anxious for the happiness of two whom she most truly loved. But Ellen's mathematical notions of right were not so to be set aside.

"Why, Louise," she said, mildly, "my father gave me life, and he has a right to say to whom it shall be devoted. I was only deliberating whether I ought to tell Edward that I love him, or whether it would be better for him not to know it."

"Better for him!" I exclaimed, passionately. "You have not a thought for yourself in your heart. I tell you it won't kill Edward, any way, for he's proud, and a man, though he does love you; but you, Ellen Adair, you will die, if you don't marry him. You need not shake your head—I've known you ever since you were a tiny child, and I tell you, you would die. Don't I know your disposition? You never loved but a few persons in all your life, and to lose one of those—the dearest, too—would kill you. You couldn't live, and see Edward Gray married to another!"

O, how meekly she answered me! Never had I seen her look so thoroughly angelic.

"I am so glad," she said, "that you think it won't kill Edward, any way. As for me, I don't think I shall die yet; but my mother's in heaven, you know, already, and I'm willing to go home to her when my Father calls me;" and she raised her mild, serious eyes to heaven, with such an expression of hopeful love and trust, that I could hardly refrain from falling

on my knees and worshipping her, as a visible incarnation of the Divine Love.

After that, Edward Gray met her but seldom, and even then usually in the presence of others; but one night they chanced to be alone for a few moments in the grape-vine arbor at Elmwood, and he told her all his love. She listened, timidly, in wild joy, blent with quick throbs of agony, and when he concluded, she answered, very quietly,

“I love you, Edward, but I cannot marry you. It is impossible!”

“I knew it—I knew it!” cried Edward, wildly, as he rushed from her presence, hearing not, or heeding not, her faint, whispered request that he would return.

Half an hour later, I found Ellen alone in the arbor, sobbing as if her heart would break.

“O, Louise,” she said, “I have made him angry, and he will never come back. He would not wait for me to tell him why I would not marry him—and he is gone!”

And, true enough, he was gone. The next morning Edward Gray had left the village, and it was years before we heard from him again.

Ellen Adair suffered deeply; every day her pale face seemed to grow thinner, and paler, and more spiritual; but she did not die. She never uttered a single complaint. Not one word of unthankfulness marred the pure gratitude of her living unto God, for her life was one continual sacrifice of herself. It was in vain that men, however noble or talented, attempted to pay her any attention. They were repulsed—quietly and politely, it is true, but yet most decidedly.

Her heart had opened like a rose-bud to the touch of one master spirit; but, like a rose-bud once withered, its leaves could never again unfold. She passed her life in the discharge of all gentle duties of love and charity; while you could never have guessed, from her manner, that a single grief had ever shrined itself in her pure heart.

* * * * *

Five years had passed, and a new house was going up in Rye-field. A stranger had purchased the ground, the most beautiful site in the village. Then an architect arrived with his troops of workmen, and soon the imposing structure rose up fair and stately. The grounds in the neighborhood were laid out with exquisite taste, and everything was being arranged and beautified according to the directions of its invisible owner.

At last came a rumor that Edward Gray, who had been spending some time in Europe, had returned, and was become the proprietor of the grove, and its new edifice.

“Of course he must have got married,” said the gossips; “he never would think of taking that trouble for himself, all alone.”

For once it seemed that the gossips were right; for, as soon as the house and its appurtenances were completed, a handsome travelling-carriage drove through the village, and stopped at the grove. From this same travelling-carriage alighted our old friend Edward Gray, and after him a lady, young, slight, and, the gossips said, beautiful.

For my own part, I thought of all the happiness at the grove without either pleasure or envy, for I was heartily provoked with Edward.

True, Ellen Adair had refused to marry him ; but why could he not have asked her again — why could he not have waited ?

I was brooding these things in my heart, about a week after the family had become domesticated, when Ellen herself came in.

“Have you been to the grove yet?” was her first inquiry.

“No, nor I don’t want to. I don’t like Edward Gray, now ; and, as for his upstart wife, I don’t want to see her !”

“Why, Louise, are you quite sure you are in your senses ?” said Ellen, quietly, as she laid her hand upon my brow. “I am going to call on Mrs. Gray,” she continued, “and you must go and get your bonnet and come with me. It’s a civility we owe to strangers ; and, beside, I don’t mind telling you, Louise, I do want to see what kind of a person Edward Gray has found to love.”

I know not what sort of spell the girl exercised over me with her “come and go,” but, really, it soon began to seem a necessary piece of civility, and a very desirable thing, to call on the Grays, and forthwith I got ready and went.

Ellen was looking beautifully, that afternoon. She wore a thin white hat, with pale pink flowers and ribbons, a dainty white muslin dress, and a delicate rose-colored scarf.

She was “fair and beautiful” to look upon, as the Scotch people say ; and I was wondering, as she tripped up the gravelled walk, whether the sight of that sweet face would not still have power to make Edward Gray’s matrimonial heart ache.

A servant conducted us into the pleasant parlor. It was indeed arranged with exquisite taste — books, and pictures, and rare objects of *vertu* brought from beyond the sea, were seat-

tered round in luxurious profusion, while the other appointments of the room were gorgeous enough for the boudoir of a countess. "And all this might have been Ellen's!" thought I, as I surveyed it.

Edward Gray entered first. He was indeed handsomer than ever, and I trembled for the effect of his appearance on Ellen. She rose as he entered the room, but immediately sat down again. He approached her cordially, with an extended hand.

"Miss Adair," he remarked, "it gives me pleasure to welcome you to our new home."

"And it gives me pleasure, Mr. Gray," she replied, "to welcome you to Rycfield."

And this was all. Thus they met—two persons who had once been all the world to each other. I knew that Nellie loved him still, but for Edward Gray I could not answer.

Very soon Mrs. Gray entered. The character of her face was not sufficiently exalted to be called beautiful, but she was an extremely pretty person. She was a blonde, with luxuriant hair, and large, clear blue eyes, with a smile in them. Her slight figure was arrayed in the most elegant and tasteful manner, and, altogether, she was as nice a little wife as one need wish to see.

She welcomed us both cordially, remarking to me, "I have often heard my husband speak of you, Miss Cleveland; but I don't remember to have heard Miss Adair's name before. Perhaps" (turning to Ellen) "you were not in town when my husband was here before?"

"O, yes," said I, simply, "surely Ellen was in town, but

perhaps Mr. Gray mentioned me more especially, because my brother Frank was his most intimate friend."

Our call, though a brief one, was sufficient to assure me that there was no intellectual sympathy between the talented, brilliant Edward Gray, and his very nice little wife; and to convince me, also, that Ellen Adair was not quite forgotten. After many years, Edward told me the particulars of his marriage.

It seems, he had acquired his immense fortune by a successful discovery which he patented in England, soon after he left Ryefield; and then, being desirous of making the tour of the continent before his return, he had joined the party of an English nobleman, whose wife was an American. The lady's sister, Miss Maria Clinton, had been of the party, and very soon he discovered that his polite attentions to the younger lady had awakened a sentiment warmer than friendship in his behalf.

At first, this perplexed him; then it flattered him, and soothed the vanity wounded by Ellen Adair's rejection; and so, before he was aware of it, he found himself the husband of Maria Clinton. But he awoke from the honeymoon to discover a want in his heart which she could not satisfy, a love she had never yet been able to awaken. Still would the sweet face of Ellen Adair haunt his slumbers; still he awoke to sigh over a love his conscience condemned, and his judgment pronounced hopeless.

I know not by what strange fate he was urged on, when he came to Ryefield, and fixed his residence so near the object of his hopeless love. For her, at least, his coming was not well. I was right in thinking she could not endure to see him the husband of another.

From the day on which we called at the grove, she commenced

to pine ; and, while the summer days grew long and pleasant, her step became more and more feeble, and her cheek paler.

It was late in an August afternoon, the sun was just sinking, and his infinite glory streamed over the broad earth, and through the blinds, into the windows, and over the carpet of Ellen Adair's pleasant room.

Ellen herself was sitting in a high-backed chair, bolstered up by pillows, watching the clouds ; and when the last one faded from the west, and the stars began to come out in the clear blue, she turned to me, and said, solemnly,

“ Louise, I have seen the sun go down and the stars rise for the last time ! ” There was nothing mournful in her voice ; it was only the certainty, and the shadow of death, that frightened me. Ellen's face looked calm and sweet, as usual, and there was no tremor in her clear voice.

“ Must you go to-night, darling ? ” I whispered, mournfully.

“ Yes, Louise, and, were it not that I don't like to leave you, I should be very thankful. While here I had to struggle fiercely with a terrible sin, — the temptation to love Edward Gray, now that he was the husband of another. Thank God, Louise, that this cup is about to pass from me ; for it will not be wrong to look down on him from heaven and love him. ”

I stole from the room, as she ceased speaking, and taking a card, I wrote hurriedly on the back of it :

“ EDWARD GRAY : Ellen Adair is ill — dying. She will die to-night. I do not say if you ever loved her, for I know you did, but, if you love her now, come to us directly.

“ LOUISE CLEVELAND. ”

I sent this note by the errand-boy, and then reëntered Ellen's room, without telling her anything of the proceeding. In five minutes Edward Gray stood by her bed-side, for we had lain her down on her couch by the window. Going up to her, he knelt down by her side, and, folding her in his arms, he exclaimed,

“O, Ellen, my first, my only love!” For a moment she shrank from his embrace, but he only held her the more firmly.

“Ellen,” he said, “darling Ellen, you shall rest here now; you are dying, and it is not wrong. I will hold you thus, once in this life. You shall die upon my bosom! O, Ellen, how I have loved you! God in heaven knows that, from the first moment I ever saw you, you have been the very idol of my being. It is true, I called another wife. I took another to my home and heart; but it was for her sake, not for mine, and when I did not know you had ever loved me.

“O, Ellen, my soul's darling! will you not be mine in heaven? Thank God with me, my beautiful, that there is death, there is heaven!”

And there he sat all this time, clasping her in his arms, as she had never dared to hope he would clasp her on earth. The past was forgotten, — the long, bitter, suffering past, — in the ecstasy of that one hour, snatched, as it were, from the very jaws of death.

Silently, for a long time, Ellen lay there, with her head upon his bosom. At length she said, with a faltering voice, “Glory be to God on high! God is good, — is he not, Edward? — to give us one hour like this, even though it must be death which hallows it!”

Then, for a long time, there was once more silence between us in that chamber of death; and once more Ellen broke it.

“Come and kiss me, Louise,” she said; and I pressed my lips to hers. “You have been very dear to me, my more than sister; and God will bless you for all your love.

“My father,” and she turned her eyes on the old man, seated, in his agony, at the bed’s foot, — “my father, will you not kiss your motherless child, and bless her?”

Fondly the father pressed his lips to her brow, and bade God be merciful unto her and bless her in her last agony, even as she had blessed him, all the days of her life. Then she turned to her lover, and, resting her head still closer on his bosom, she whispered,

“Edward, I am all yours now, until I am summoned by our Father and our God. He is our God, isn’t he, Edward? Strive, for my sake, dearest, to put all your faith in him, to pray for his grace, and finally to meet me in heaven. But I can’t talk any more. I am faint. Pray for strength, dearest. Kiss me once!” and, for the first time in his life, Edward Gray pressed his lips to those of the idol of his youth, the worship of his manhood. But he kissed the dead, for Ellen’s lips were cold and stiff.

So soon, so silently, had her spirit passed from earth to heaven, while the light was still kindling in her eyes, and the sweet smile still beaming about her lips.

We laid her to rest in a quiet, blessed spot, where the grass is green, and the brook murmurs by her, ever and forever, soothing her sleep with its melody. The days of her father were long ago numbered, and he, too, sleeps beside his Ellen.

Edward Gray was a kind, devoted husband, but a year has passed since his wife sunk into her grave; and, sitting beside me in a pleasant nook, not many days ago, he told me, for the first time, of his relations with Maria, his motives in marrying, and the sacred altar in his heart, where Ellen's name had been always written, and where no eyes, save hers, had ever gazed.

But that is past. I am an old woman now, and Edward Gray also will soon be gathered to his fathers. There will be other graves, beside Ellen's and that of my little brother; and over them all will the sunshine rest, the stars smile, the willows wave, and the green trees nod.

We have loved in life, and in death we will not be divided.

A WALK IN MAY-TIME.

WE wandered by the burnside,
In the merry month of May,
When the leaflets and the blossoms
Were keeping holiday ;
When the cowslips starred the meadows,
And the alders fringed the brook,
And the early violets lifted
To the skies a loving look ;
And the wild choke-cherry blossoms
You braided in my hair,
Till my cheek with blushes deepened,
As you said that I was fair !
And I thought that sweet spring sunshine
Jacob's ladder might have been,
On which angels clomb to heaven,
And came down again to men ;
For the breezes breathed but incense,
And the streamlet breathed but prayer,
And a misty gold went floating
On the fragrant spring-time air ;
And I surely thought your kisses
Were like blessings from the skies,
And a thousand visions slumbered
In your blue and dreamy eyes !

But the day blew slowly over
 With a noise of wind and rain ;
To your eyes there came a shadow,
 To my heart there came a pain ;
And the streamlet 'gan to dimple ; —
 Was it with some angel's tears,
Who sat weeping, in the silence,
 O'er the changes of the years ?
There shall come another May-time ;
 By the burnside I shall walk,
Hearing no glad step beside me,
 And no sound of pleasant talk ;
Gone will be the breathing fragrance,
 And the music in the air,
As the wild choke-cherry blossoms
 Will be withered from my hair.
Never more, like Jacob's ladder,
 Will the sunshine seem to fall ;
'T will be clomb by ghosts and spectres,
 Bearing up a funeral pall ;
But my life is blowing over,
 With a noise of wind and rain,—
I shall sleep the death-sleep calmly,
 And my heart will cease from pain.

HUSH!

HUSH! she is dying! The sunlight streams through the plate-glass windows, the room is fragrant with the sweet breath of southern flowers, — large, milk-white African lilies, roses a nightingale might stoop to worship, cape jasmines, and camellias with their large, glossy leaves.

Through the open casement steals the faint, musical tinkle of playing fountains; and the light, tempered pleasantly by rose-curtains, kindles up gorgeous old paintings with a halo bright as a rainbow. It is as if fresher sunshine was falling earthward on the bower of beauty.

The canary sings in his gilded cage, — *her* canary, — and the mocking-bird raises his clear note higher and higher on the perfumed air.

Why do you clench your hand till the nails draw the rich rosy blood through the quivering skin? Why do you grind your teeth together, and hiss between, that one word, hush? It's a beautiful home, I'm sure; and that lady, with her head upon your bosom, is fair as any dream-vision of the painter.

Surely nothing could be purer than that broad, high brow; nothing brighter than those sunny curls!

And she loves you, too! Ah, yes, any one could read that, in the deep violet eyes raised so tenderly to your own. Ah! that is it, — your young wife loves you!

She linked to yours the existence of an *angel*, when she knelt beside you at the marriage altar.

For twelve long, golden months, an *angel* has walked or sat by your side, or slept in your bosom.

You knew it! No mortal woman ever made your heart bow before a purity so divine!

No earthly embrace ever so filled your soul with the glory from beyond the stars; no earthly smile ever shone so unchangingly above all such noisome things as you earth-worms call care and trouble. She is an angel, and *other* angels have been singing to her in the long days of this pleasant June-time.

“HUSH!” you say, but you cannot shut out the anthem-notes of heaven from those unsealed ears! Louder, higher swell the hymns of the seraphs,—brighter grows the smile round your young wife’s lips.

“Charles,” she whispers, “dearest, I’m almost home; *you* will come by and by, and I am going to ask God to bless you!” But you cannot bear it; you turn away, and the big tears gather in the violet eyes.

You have held her there on your bosom all day—all night; are you tired?—*but* you don’t answer. Closer, closer you clasp the slight, fair figure; painfully you press your lips to the cold brow;—*Carrie is dead!*

What is it to you that the sunshine is bright? what that its rays fall on broad lands—*your* lands? what is it, now that *she* can walk on them no more? And what is death—her death? Few people knew her; no nation will raise a monument to her memory! But she was yours,—your all!

No, — yours and God's; and your year of joy is over, and she rests on His bosom now, in heaven.

They have dug a grave for her; spring-flowers brighten over it, and the green grass smiles with daisies and violets. You go there and sigh and pray, and ask God if you, too, may go home; and, when no answer comes, your proud heart rises up in bitterness, and, with the bold, wicked words upon your tongue, you pause, — for your guardian angel looks down from heaven, and whispers, "*Hush!*"

Hush! she is praying! There is no carpet upon the floor, no fragrance of flowers in the comfortless room, and the sun's broad glare falls all untempered upon the rough boards and the heap of straw in the corner.

She is beautiful, that young girl who kneels there. Her face would have been a glorious study for one of Greutze's pale, spiritual Madonnas. Her attitude — the upraised face, the clasped hands, the long, black hair streaming backward — might have been a model for Praxiteles, as she kneels there, in that glaring, uncomfortable room, by the pallet of straw in the comfortless corner.

"*Hush!*" You should hear her prayer; it is not a model prayer; it is not so much the giving thanks for the blessings showered upon her lot; not a petition put up half-falteringly for friend or lover; — no, it is the near approach to a great and mighty Spirit!

"Father," it pleads, "O, Father, save me from myself!" There is a crushing agony in the tone, and the big tears roll

down from her pale cheeks, and fall on the bare floor like round, glittering diamonds. Not always had she been thus desolate.

Her father — a proud, sensitive, dreamy man, better fitted for a poet than a merchant — had been unfortunate in his speculations, and his creditors had turned him beggared from the fair home he had built for his dead wife's child !

“Brutes, fiends!” do you say? *Hush!* They were *safe* men, — their notes were good on Wall-street; *true* men, — they carried all their threats into execution; *pious* men, — they went to church every Sunday, and carried prayer-books clasped with gold and bound in velvet; *just* men, — Daniels come to judgment, — *they* only took their *own*. What was it to them whether Paul Clifford starved, or his daughter sank to a ruin worse than death? *They* didn't see why people would get into such scrapes, and then look to honest people to help them out; they never got into any, — not *they*! O, they were *good* men, were Paul Clifford's creditors !

Dreadfully shocked they were, when the proud, sensitive poet-merchant put an end to an existence misfortune had rendered torture. They would n't let Blanche Clifford teach music in their families, — not they! Why, she might turn out as bad as her father.

This very day Blanche had been to the chief of them, and pleaded for work, in vain, with the tears streaming from her beautiful eyes. This day his son, who had been her own betrothed, had whispered to her of flight with him, — of a bridal where their own hearts should be the priests; and Blanche, loving him still, as woman loves but once, had felt all her soul thrill to the strange power of his brilliant words, as he whispered of a fair

southern home, till she seemed to see the glorious sunshine steeping southern flowers and crimsoning rich clusters of southern fruit ; and then, remembering that she could not be his wife, had put her fingers in her ears, and ran for more than life, — for the hope of heaven !

This day, as she knelt, her soul passed forth from the weary scene of misery and starvation, and her fair form was left stark, and stiff, and cold, in the hot glare of the June sunshine.

Truly, you say, are God's judgments in *this* world unequal !
Be silent.

There will be a judgment at the day of judgment ; and mortal eyes can poorly read the counsels of the Infinite and Unchangeable. — HUSH !

“AN EMPTY POCKET’S THE WORST
OF CRIMES.”

To be sure! Nothing at all like it! A man may get his money in whatever way he pleases; be guilty of usury, extortion, anything, so that his coat is fine and his boots glossy.

I tell you what, — there is nothing like *velvet* to sanctify religion. Now, any common-sense individual can't help seeing that there's no possibility of John the coachman, who stands on the church-steps holding the horses and congealing in his new livery, being in as religious a frame of mind as his master, who sits in his comfortable, damask-covered pew, kneels on his embroidered hassock, and says amen with such an unction.

It would be the death of me even to suggest that John the coachman gets just about as good a knowledge of the sermon as his master; that the cold, and the horses, and the handsome lady's maid over the way, don't any more occupy his attention than the rise in stocks, the prosperity of his children, and the sense of his position as a family-man, occupy John the coachman's master, kneeling on the hassock, or sitting in his cushioned pew. I must confess one question *does* pop into my head, rather provokingly, — whether there is one Gospel for the poor and another for the rich, — whether it is a Christian duty for John's master to go to church, and John to stay outside.

I should like so much to know which set that passage was meant for where it says, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

I guess that means the poor folks. It can't be that rich people have any such disagreeable duties to perform as faith and repentance.

Sackcloth and ashes would n't look well outside of velvet and embroidery. I do believe rich folks ought to raise John's salary, though, when, besides standing out in the cold till the tip-ends of his fingers get irreligiously lukewarm, he has to do all their repenting for them

WOODED AND WON.

“Div me just a little piece of b’ead, dear mamma! P’east, dear mamma, and baby will be so good! Baby hundry — baby so hundry — no b’ead so lon’ time! P’ease div baby a little!”

“O, God, it is too much!” and Kathleen threw down her work, already stained with tears, and caught her famished child to her heart. Time was when Kathleen had never known want, — when her little foot sank half-buried in rich carpets, when her delicate form reclined on velvet and down, and her fastidious taste was pampered by viands the rarest and most costly. Then there was a broad, strong breast for Kathleen to rest upon, a fond arm to shelter her, and a voice which called her, many times every day, “Kate, my life’s star, my darling!”

But he had died, — died with his head upon her bosom; and she had seen the sod piled above his breast, and turned away, a stricken, lonely woman, clasping her little Winnie to her heart. Then came ruthless creditors, whose rights she never dared to question, and swept away from her her fair home, and even the treasured bridal tokens given her by the friends of her own orphan childhood. Kathleen was destitute. Those who had courted her society of old — who would have given a small fortune to be invited to her parties, or take an airing in her carriage — swept by her now on the other side. Only one friend remained. He was an old man, rich and influential, one

who had sought to gain her hand before she had given it to Harry, and who renewed his offer now, and still in vain. She had buried her heart, she said, in Harry's grave, and she should die if she could not be true to his memory. O, how wearily had toiled those fingers, unused to labor! and still her scanty pittance could not procure the little Winnie bread, and still the hunger-fiend was gnawing at her own vitals.

She strained the little one to her bursting heart. "Mother will give Winnie bread pretty soon, darling, if she has to beg it." There was a step upon the stair, and the old man entered.

"What! your child, Kathleen, wailing for bread! That must not be! If you will not be the old man's wife, you must be his child;—come to my house, Katie, for I am very desolate. I will take care of you and Winnie,—you shall never want more."

"B'ead, mamma, p'ease div Winnie some b'ead," broke in the infant's wailing cry; and, raising her dark eyes to heaven, Kathleen made answer,

"I have no right, Mr. Green, to accept your generosity, without making you some equivalent. My heart is dead, buried with Harry; but, if my hand, with my esteem, and my unswerving truth and gratitude, can make you happy, you shall have it. Harry will forgive me, when he knows it is for his child's sake I do it."

And thus it was that Kathleen became the old man's darling, and the world said she had forgotten and was happy. But she bore the same resemblance to the Kathleen of old as does a marble statue to the model after which it is chiselled. Sometimes, in her hours of solitude, she would clasp his child to her

heart, and weep and sob like an anguished woman ; but in society no statue could have been colder or prouder. Every one said Mrs. Green was more beautiful than ever, but there seemed a kind of mystery about her. No one dared to address her as of old, and yet every one sought her society. The throbbings of her proud, true heart were bound down with folds of silk and velvet, and the gems which glittered in her hair were not colder or brighter than her cold, proud eyes. But the world did not see her in her hours of lonely anguish. They could not share her lonely vigils, kneeling at the foot of the cross ; or know how sweet was the release, when the kiss of the death-angel froze the smile upon her lips.

OUR LADY UNA.

LADY UNA, pure and saint-like,
Wondrous mother, perfect wife !
O'er my heart there falls a shadow,
From the deep calm of thy life.
And I bow my head in homage
To thy matron beauty fair,
For I know some angel braided
Back the dark waves of thy hair.

Surely seraphs, straying outward,
Underneath the stars at night,
Kissed thy lips and forehead, lingering
With a thrill of deep delight ;
Leaving there a peace so holy,
Mortal hearts grow hushed in awe
At thy wisdom pure and lowly,
Type of God's most perfect law.

Lady Una, child-like kneeling,
At thy feet I breathe a prayer, —
Let but once thy hands in blessing
Gently fall upon my hair ;
So shall I, who blindly traverse
Paths which angel-feet have trod,
Sometimes see from far the glory
Of the far-off home of God.

VALERIE.

“ I feel my soul drawn unto thee,
Strangely, and strongly, and more and more,
As to one I have known and loved before ;
For every soul is akin to me, that dwells in the land of mystery.”

GOLDEN LEGEND.

“ COME to me ! Come to me ! ”

It was the third night I had heard that summons in my sleep, and awoke to find a cold sweat on my brow, and a chilliness as of death in my limbs. The third night, and I dared not disregard it longer. I knew that it was the voice of Valérie ; I knew that those were the pale hands of my beloved stretched out to me thus imploringly ; I knew that those were her beseeching eyes looking into mine from the far distance. But the way was long. I had not met Valérie for years ; and she was living in a stately castle, many thousand miles away. Between us were high mountains and boiling waves, and many a league of torrid deserts. The second night, when the voice called me, I had made answer,

“ Wherefore dost thou summon me, O restless spirit, suffering me not to slumber ? The way is long, and, lo ! I am weak and helpless ! ” But still the answer was, “ Come to me ! come to me ! ” and the third morning I started.

I crossed many a rapid stream, many a dreary waste ; and every night, when I lay down to rest, still sounded that far-off voice in my ear, hurrying, pleading, beseeching, — “ Come to

me!" I said it was years since I had met Valérie. When I was a boy scarcely yet fifteen, I was the pupil of a far-famed sage, and in his house I first saw my beloved. She, too, was there, from a great distance. She was three years my senior, and at first I only dared to gaze timidly into the mysterious depths of her eyes. She was always dressed in black, with her heavy black hair pushed off her broad, intellectual forehead, and lying round her pale cheeks like shadows of midnight. I used to look all day into her great eyes; and at night I would see her in my dreams, her white, still face set in its night of hair.

I don't know how it was that I ever dared to speak to her of love, but I suppose I obeyed the voice of my fate. The hour came, and I spoke. Valérie threw herself into my arms. There was no attempt at disguise or concealment. In that faint, sweet voice, which always sounded to my ear like music out of grave-yards, she whispered, as she laid her soft lips to my cheek, "Paul, I love you! — I am yours now and forever." And never, surely, were vows of love breathed by truer lips. Valérie was mine.

We talked often of that world of spirits lying above us and around us — of the power of the immortal, and the strength of the human will. "There is no such thing as death," said Valérie, one day. "What men call so, is but the change, when the tired, worn-out body needs rest, and the soul seeks another habitation. We die when our souls will; and I shall only die when you are by my side, for I will give you a double might. My soul shall enter your body, and dwell with yours. No matter how many leagues of land lie between us, — I will summon you to my side, and my soul shall not go forth until it enter the tabernacle of yours."

Months passed on, and we were parted. Valérie returned to the castle of her fathers, and I entered the lists at the great tournament of life. "Valérie," I had said, "when years have passed, and I have won gold and fame, I will seek you in the far-off castle, and you shall be my wife."

"Yes, Paul; but this frail body may get weary sooner than that; and then I shall summon you to my side, and you shall bear away my soul to help you onward. — Will you come?"

I bound myself by a solemn oath, on the holy Evangels, and we parted, — Valérie stretching toward me ever and forever her pale hands, and turning on mine her great eyes, streaming with tears.

I had gone forth into the world, and fought manfully against the spectral knight, in his death-black armor, whom men call Fate. I had wrested many things from his iron fingers; and before every encounter I had said, "I will win this, and this; and, bearing its price in my hand, I will go to Valérie;" and every time my soul had been unsatisfied, and I had waited till still another good gift should be mine, ere I started on my journey.

But at last, in the solemn winter-midnight, the summons came. In the solemn winter-midnight, the pale hands supplicated me, the great eyes melted me with their tears, the wailing voice pleaded, "Come to me, come to me!" and I went forth on my way.

After many days, I came to a green path, which led up through a thicket of roses to a stately castle; and again I heard the voice, coming from a turret in the left wing of the building. The castle was of dark-gray stone. It had towers and bastions, "With its battlements high in the hush of the air, and the turrets thereon."

Under its windows lay sleeping a fair lake, very calm and tranquil. On its marge grew strange, flame-colored flowers, shaped like living things; and over them fluttered gorgeous insects, red, green, and blue. I drew near to the brink, and gazed downward; and the reflection of my own face seemed to come from very far off, and I looked pale and wan, as I had seen the faces of the dead. And then once more, from the lofty turret, fell the sound of that wailing voice.

I opened the ponderous castle-door, which yielded readily to my touch, and passed onward through a long suite of rooms. They were furnished with a cold, funereal magnificence. I saw no one. There was nothing to give evidence of life. The carpets on the floor were rich and dark; the hangings were of heavy crimson; and the furniture of solid mahogany, quaintly carved in curious devices, the forms of griffins and monsters. The statues were of persons already dead, cold and sepulchral in the ceremonies of the grave; the paintings were livid and ghastly, as of human beings transfixed in mortal agony. The table in the centre of the long hall seemed like a hearse; and on it stood a vase, in the form of a death's head, the face upturned and the wide-open mouth filled with a bouquet of the same flame-colored flowers which grew upon the margin of the lake. I had time for only a passing glance at all these things, as I was hurried onward, and ever onward, by that beseeching, resistless voice. At last I came to a narrow, winding staircase, up which I climbed, and before me was a heavy, oaken-panelled door, slightly ajar. I pushed it open, and entered a room which seemed a chamber of mystery. It was hung with thick folds of sable velvet. It had no windows, but from a dome of colored glass fell rays of

light, golden, and green, and crimson, chasing each other fantastically over the black drapery. Directly beneath, and in the full radiance of white light pouring from its very centre, where all the colors of the rainbow were concentrated to one focus, stood a lofty bedstead of carved ebony. It formed the support to a couch of crimson velvet, and here reposed a female figure. The long hair, black as night, floated over the white pillows; the great, fathomless eyes were wide open, with their tides of light coming and going. The pale hands were outstretched; and the low voice hushed its unquiet wailing at last, and only whispered, "Paul, you have come to me! — life of my life, I am at rest!" The weary leagues of torrid desert, the rushing streams, and the heaven-crowned mountains, were crossed at last! — Valérie was in my arms!

I had climbed upon the tessellated couch, and once more Valérie's arms were around my neck, her head on my bosom, and I held there in my embrace that only one, of all earth's daughters, to whose voice the pulses of my soul could ever, in all eternity, keep time. I held her there for hours. Neither of us spoke, until the sunlight had ceased to pour downward through the stained-glass dome, and the room was only lighted by the ever-burning wax tapers, standing on the black tables, in the corners.

"Paul!" said Valérie, at length, looking upward; "Paul, do you see that star? Is it Mars or Venus?"

"Mars, my beloved!"

"Yes, Paul, I thought so. It is the star of strength, and when it sets, this poor body will be worn out, and I must leave it. I have been on a weary journey, my beloved! Many days

ago, I left the body lying here, and went forth to summon you. I have lived many years, Paul, since our last meeting — many more than could be counted in earthly records. Do you not know, beloved, the old Arabian secret of the fast life? Do you not know that every human soul, in the first hour of its incarnation, has a weird appointed it, according to its strength; and it may do this task quickly, and pass to another sphere of action, or it may linger slothfully in the body, like the toad who slept a thousand years in the ruins of Thebes? I have wrought my work quickly, Paul; and I have sent for you, because, when the star of strength shall set, my soul, departing from the flesh, shall dwell with yours. Lift me up, my beloved, and lay my head just where I can hear your heart beat beneath it. That is it, strong, true heart; now listen, and, while I still may speak, you shall hear the secrets of the stars.”

And, holding her there, I listened. God of the Hebrews, is there forgiveness for the idol worshipper, who dies holding his idol to his breast, with his cold lips pressed to the shrine? I cannot answer. In that hour Valérie told me strange secrets of nature, wizard-spells that I dare not whisper over to myself at midnight. Spoken here, they would raise the gray stones from the roof, rive the madman's fetters, and lay chapel and tower in ruins. And, between them all, Valérie interrupted herself with oaths, and vows, and passionate cries of love, that on other lips than hers would have been blasphemy; and, whispered there, with her lips against my cheek, they seemed to scorch me, like the wind blowing upward from the valley where flows the bottomless river of Phlegethon. What wonder that love so uttered is unblest? Love which raises before the Saviour, and his cross,

a human idol, and hides the brow of the Son of man with the tresses which o'ersweep a mortal bosom ?

* * * * *

It was morning ere the star of strength sank in the west. Valérie had lain for some time silently watching it, and when it disappeared she raised her head in momentary strength. She pressed her lips fervently to mine, and then the fire passed from her eyes, the graceful head fell heavily back upon my arm, the sweet mouth closed, the long lashes drooped downward, and the unbound tresses floated over my bosom like a pall. Valérie was what men called dead ; but I knew my beloved was living still, free and happy, now that her task of life was wrought. I put her gently from me, and smoothed the pillows for her unconscious head.

All that day I watched her. I sat motionless by her side, while the features grew more and more rigid, looking out from their frame of death-black hair. That night, at midnight, a change came. All day had my eyes been wide open,—fixed upon her face,—but, while the bell was chiming twelve, I felt an unseen hand pass before them, and they were sealed. Then, all around me, I felt a buzzing, swarming life. The air was full of life. It was above me, beneath me, around me,—life that thrilled the blood in all my veins, and quickened all my pulses, and yet kept me silent and motionless. And then there was a shock which took away my breath. The castle shook to its foundations. The calm lake under the windows burst its bounds, and hurried surging toward some unseen sea. The tapers flared upwards in the corners, and I could feel the room flooded with a strange light. A moment, and all was still. The

life had departed, the bell tolled one, and I knew that Valérie's soul had entered my body. Over the corpse on the carved ebony bedstead had passed a change too ghastly to name. It was my beloved no longer. Valérie was in my heart, and the dead body there was no longer aught but the sister of the worms.

* * * * *

We left the castle, I and the soul of Valérie, and went forth among men. I believe they feared us; they could not comprehend the strange might of my two-souled existence. They did not know that when I laid my hand in kindness on an old friend's shoulder, it was not my will, but that strange, passionate soul of Valérie, in its wild strength, which flew at his throat and throttled him. They bound me with fetters, and put me in this strong fortress; and they think they have me safe. They would start up from their slumbers and tremble, did they but know that I am free still,—that I stay here only because it is my fate to suffer, and that when the hour is come I shall go forth again, I and the soul of Valérie, to dwell in the far-distant castle, whose western turrets rise up out of the still lake, with the flame-colored flowers on its margin.

They tell me I am mad! They told me it was not a castle where I found Valérie, but a stately tomb. That the furniture I saw was grave-stones, and the table with its death's-head was a hearse; and that there I found my Valérie dead, in the white garments of the grave. That I called wildly on her name, and watched there by her side, with wide-opened eyes, until at last sleep came at midnight, and I woke up raving. But I remembered once more the voice which summoned me; the weary

journey, and the chamber of mystery, with its black hangings and stained-glass dome. Then knew I that I was not mad. I speak the words of truth and soberness. Hush your murmurs, heart of mine! the weird is almost over. Soon shall we go to rest, I and the soul of Valérie, my beloved!

JUNE-DAY DREAMINGS.

SITTING on the mossy rock,
Where the shepherd guards the flock,
Where I used to sit of old,
Weaving chaplets manifold
(Strung with Fancy's threads of gold);
Has another tale been told.
Friends, that in other days
Roamed o'er these pleasant ways,
Far from my side have strayed,
To some fair realm of shade ;
And in these lonely hours,
Girt round with withered flowers,
Wherein my weary eye
Turns to the watching sky,
 Glances of pain,
Groping with outstretched hands,
Toward Death's shadow-lands,
 They come, they come again !
Not as they came of old,
 When spring-flowers were blowing,
 Or summer streams a flowing ;
 When the very air was humming
 With the birds and beetle-thrumming ;
And the sunshine's paly gold

Lay upon the velvet moss,
Lay upon the road-side cross,
Stretching out its kindly arms
Like a hermit in a grove of palms,
Blessing dark-browed maids who bend,
Kneeling, in those groves of Ind !
There were bands of laughing girls,
With their waves of sunny hair,
Where the snow-drops gleamed like pearls,
Over brows more purely fair, —
With their laughter-trilling lips,
And the sunshine in their eyes,
Shining still, without eclipse,
When the stars are in the skies !
Many days we roamed together,
In the summer's long, blue light,
Chasing down the lengthening shadows,
Toward the corridors of night —
Pulling cowslips in the valleys,
Hunting berries in the wood,
Where the summer sunshine dallies
With the trailing golden-rod !
But my shadow has grown longer,
As I tread those meadows wide,
And no more in summer mornings
Other shadows fall beside !
And I seem to see a vision, —
For they come to me once more,
From the dusky realm of phantoms,
As they never came before, —
Putting back the golden tresses,
Which around their foreheads lay,

Like the smiling of the sunset
O'er the death-bed of the day,
With their blue eyes gazing upward,
And their pale hands clasped in prayer,
Journeyed they unto the country
Than all other lands more fair ;
With my hands I cannot clasp them,
And my dim eyes cannot see
When they seem to smile upon me,
For the tears that in them be !
On the same gray rock I 'm sitting,
Still the butterflies are flitting —
Still the very air is humming
With the birds and beetle-thrumming ;
Cowslips nod within the valleys,
Berries blush within the wood ;
Still the summer sunshine dallies
With the trailing golden-rod, —
But they cannot give me pleasure ;
To a slow and solemn measure
Treads my heart the march of life,
Getting weary with the strife ;
Only spirits sit beside me,
Only air is on my brow ;
Only unseen fingers guide me,
I am weary, — where art thou ?

THE MAN IN THE MOON.

I HAVE just been putting the rose-hued drapery away from the window of my little sanctum,

“ And I would you had been there to see
How the light broke forth so gloriously.”

The moon is smiling down on her earth-worn daughter, as peacefully as an angel's blessing. Over the blue sky glide white, fleecy clouds, all tremulous with silvery light, and here and there a golden star floats out into the clear azure, pacing a stately minuet; for the wild star-dance of December is over. But, even to-night, my heart is beating a mournful cadence to olden memories, that came stealing over me as I sat at the pleasant window. O, what a soft hand was laid upon my tresses; but cold and still in death is that fair hand now! Still, down from Paradise gleam her brown eyes, and her voice floats out from the corridors of the past, like a spirit-whisper.

And then, there are memories, such as every one has who feels that the earth-stain has fallen on his spirit, never so lightly; — memories, half mournful, of childhood's innocent visions and trusting faith. Among these, gently to my heart there steals the shadowing of my first love-dream.

I was always a strange, wild dreamer; and I fancied that all above the earth must be the abode of the good, and true, and

beautiful ; for I was sure that down, low down beneath my feet, was the river of Phlegethon, and the sleepless hell. So upward I gazed ever, like the children in the Pilgrim's Progress ; and when they told me there was a " Man in the Moon," my childish heart soon learned to regard him as the impersonation of all beauty, light and loveliness. And then, in time, I grew to fancy he looked lovingly from his lofty throne on my simple worship ; and that he wore a smile for me, invisible to other eyes. Night after night I watched him ; and when they thought I was soundly sleeping, I would rise, and draw the curtain from before the foot of my white bed, that he might look on me in my sleep, and watch over my dreams. And when they said my eyes were dull and dreamy, and mourned that the " Great All-Father " had not gifted me with beauty, he seemed to bend and whisper, " Ah, loved one, 't is but to keep the spirit bright, and its beauty will tremble through, — thou art my heart's bride still ! "

The months and years passed on, and purer and paler grew my brow ; for I was weary — restless with ever striving to keep my heart bright for my spirit-bridegroom. O ! how I lingered for his voice, — how I watched and waited for his coming ! Wild, stormy nights, such as witches run riot in, my heart was glad, for I thought the moon shone not, because his face was gone ; and that he was roaming through the air in search of me, coming to bear me home. O ! what dreams I had of that beautiful country, of the lakes that were sleeping in the silver light, and the low chimes ringing through the folded lily-bells ! With every disappointment, my pure faith seemed to brighten, and I hoped on.

At last, my gentle mother, with tears in her prayerful eyes,

folded her soft arms around me, and, kissing her child, sent me off to school. School — ah me! it is a weary place to send a young child, with a heart brimful of spirit-fancies. I believe the scholars all laughed at my strange dream; and I think they told the teacher, for she gave me a lesson in astronomy to learn next day. She was a kind, noble woman, and yet I never dared to love her. There was a world of straight-forward, genuine kindness in her words and tone, and then she was wise, too; we children trembled as we thought how wise; but there was no romance stored away beneath her broad brow and raven hair, and I knew (for everywhere children have a God-given talisman to read the hearts of men) she would laugh mockingly at the sweet whispers of my spirit-love; so I only stole away and looked at him from the window in the broad, steep landing of the old-fashioned stairs. But they brought the lights, and took me away from my Eden, and set me down to learn my long, long lesson in astronomy! And then, for the first time, I read, with tear-dimmed eyes, how far the moon is from our little world!

Perhaps older children have dreamed dreams a little like my own. Perhaps others than I may have looked too many weary miles above them, and read their fate in eyes that gave back no answering light into their own. But scarcely more bitter can have been their agony than mine, when, in my innocent, trusting childhood, with my white robe still floating like a cloud about me, and the heavenly sunshine still sleeping in my hair, I read this terrible sentence, that seemed the death-knell of all human hopes and joys, "The distance of the moon from the earth is two hundred and forty thousand miles!" It crushed all my beautiful star-hopes in a moment. I knew he had not learned to

love me from that long distance off; and I thought it was so far he could never journey earth-ward. O! how bitterly I wept that night, with the curtains closely drawn at my bed's foot, that he might not look at my misery! But at last I sobbed myself to sleep; and then there came to me the beautiful Virgin mother, with her smiling eyes; my bed grew soft and light, like the little bed at home, and she lifted my head on her bosom, and whispered, "Be good, dear child, and look upward still; there is love for thee in heaven!" But she could not take me with her, for I must linger on the green earth, ever striving to keep my heart bright, and my white robe pure. And still I strive, and still I linger; and the memory of that early love, and the gentle whisper of the Virgin mother, go ever with me as a talisman.

But others than I have dreamed thus! Others than I have been woke to tears and suffering,—and God grant that to all such summoning whispers from the Eden-land may come; and to the heart that earthly love has left desolate the love-light may still glow and brighten around the Saviour upon the cross! Truly, for such the reward is great in heaven!

THE BISHOP'S BRIDE.

THE Bishop was coming to Ryefield, — coming to spend six long summer weeks in our pleasant little village, in search of rest and quiet! Ryefield people are, for the most part, hospitable, and they usually mind their own business, at least, half the time; but, then, one does n't see a real, live bishop every day, and I suppose this was why the young ladies all got together, the day before he was expected, to form a league against his peace and happiness.

It so chanced that our bishop had never obeyed the scriptural injunction, to “be the husband of one wife.” He was thirty-five, and a bachelor. He was accounted remarkably fine-looking, and I remember I thought him even handsome, with his tall, firmly-knit figure, his clear, blue eyes, and his heavy, waving curls of chestnut-brown hair. He seemed, from all we could learn of him, to be a man of the “St. John Rivers” order, somewhat cold and stern, but indefatigably devoted to his calling. He had been admitted to the priesthood at twenty-three, and nearly ten years of his after life had been passed in the establishment of Indian missions. The bishopric had fallen on his head unsought, and in his daily life he still walked humbly, as one of the least of Christ's disciples.

And yet all his Christian humility could not prevent us from holding a sewing-society, and, as I have said, conspiring against

his peace. We must surely all get acquainted with him, — that was resolved on, and a discussion was forthwith held as to ways and means. “I shall be presented to him,” said the queenly Ada Glengyle, “for I know his sister very well, and, beside, —”

“And, beside,” interrupted dashing Kate Barclay, “you are chief soprano singer; but that won’t help us any. I say, girls, what do you think of a picnic? We could ask the bishop’s protection, just hinting that we were all lambs of his flock.”

“Capital! capital!” cried several voices; and saucy May Evelyn shook down her golden curls, and tossed her little head. “I give you fair warning, girls,” she exclaimed, laughingly, “fair warning. I am quite resolved Bishop Blake shall never leave Ryefield without a wife. If any of the rest of you can do better than I can, you’re welcome to try. But what do you say, Lily White? you have n’t spoken yet.”

“I say, that I hardly think it’s right to talk so about the bishop. He seems to me like St. Paul, or one of the angels. I don’t ever expect to get much acquainted with him; I shall be quite satisfied if, some time, he lays his hand on my head and blesses me, and looks at me with his clear, blue eyes.”

“Dear, sweet, innocent Lily!” we all cried, and the white Lily bowed her fair head, and stole away. Lily White was an orphan — every one’s darling. The whole village loved her, and already, at sixteen years old, she had been for eighteen months the teacher of the village children, and the guardian spirit of the little country school-house. No strong man, with his rod of iron, could have ruled the little ones half as skilfully as Lily, with her sceptre of love. I never heard any one call her beautiful, but, looking back, her fair face, rising up before me, leaves

the impression of surpassing beauty. And yet it was a face you might pass a hundred times in a crowd without looking after it, but, once really seen, it could never be forgotten. Every feature was fashioned with a quiet, pensive grace, that left you nothing to desire. Her eyes, a clear, dark gray, hardly deep enough in tint for hazel, were fringed with golden lashes so long they fairly cast a shadow on her pearl-like cheek; and her figure was graceful, lithe, and almost too slight. Her whole beauty was of the lily type, and she had been most fitly named.

Two days after the above conversation, we were all together, upon the green, as was often our custom on summer evenings. We were gathered in groups under the tall old elm-trees, and were chatting merrily, when, glancing up, we perceived our beloved gray-haired rector, and with him Bishop Blake. They had come amongst us unperceived; but the bishop spoke.

“Good-evening, my dear young ladies,” he said, in his deep, musical tones; “I must get acquainted with all of you, for I believe you are all ‘lambs of my flock.’”

I don't know, to this day, whether this latter clause of the sentence was a genuine expression of the good bishop's kindness of heart, or whether he had by some means become informed of our conversation at the sewing-society; but I do know there was n't a girl present whose cheek didn't wear the hue of a peony as she replied to the bishop's salutation.

After that, we found the bishop not at all formidable, and really a delightful companion. Saucy May Evelyn declared that he *did* flirt — that he was particularly attentive to everybody, and yet not particularly attentive to anybody. It was such an unusual thing for a bishop to hurry through with his

appointments early in the season, just for the sake of recruiting his health at a simple country village! No wonder the girls determined he should not leave without getting married. But time passed on, and his resolution did n't seem any nearer being carried into effect. If one person was more frequently than another his companion, it was May Evelyn. Her piquancy seemed to amuse him, much as would the gambols of a favorite child; and the little romp affirmed that she could never succeed in convincing him that she was not his granddaughter.

The last day of July rose with a strange glory, like the clouds that herald a tempest. The sun looked forth out of a heavy mist, and sent before him clouds robed in gorgeous drapery of gold and purple. The day passed over, scorching, sultry and silent. But toward night the storm broke, and the evening set in wild and wet. The gloom was impenetrable, save when the darkness was rent apart by a fitful flash of lightning, brief, but terribly bright.

It was nearly midnight, and still the bishop sat by the small table in his pleasant study at the rectory. Sometimes he read; then he would lay the book aside, and listen to the wail, the desolate tramp, of the winds without. At last there came a knock at the door, and the bishop, drawing his dressing-gown about him, was going down stairs, when he heard it opened by Jennie, the old housekeeper.

“Why, child, is it you, in this dreadful storm? and what do you want?” he heard her ask; and then a low, sweet voice made answer —

“Old Dame Margery is dying, Jennie, and I was staying with her all alone. She kept shrieking out for a minister to pray by her bed-side, and I felt that I could not hope for mercy in my own last hour if I disregarded her prayer. There was no one else to come, and I thought Tom would harness the horse, and take the rector back with me.”

“Come in, come in, you strange child!” said Jennie, commandingly. “As for you, you won’t go back till day-light; and the master is sick, and can’t be disturbed, let alone the asking him to go out in such a storm as this.”

“O, but Jennie, indeed you must not keep me! If no one can go with me, I must go back alone. I should never rest again, if I left poor Margery there to die, with no watcher but the storm. No, no, Jennie, I must go!”

“You are right,” said Bishop Blake, advancing to the door. “You shall go, and I will go with you,” and he laid his hand upon Lily White’s tresses, all wet with the storm. “Jennie, you need not call Tom; just give me a lantern, and I can harness my horse myself, as I have done, many a worse night than this. Take this poor child into the study, in the mean time. There is a good fire there, and she will get warm; and then give her a glass of mulled wine, if you have it,—it will keep her from taking cold.”

Never before had Lily White revered the bishop so deeply as when he stood by her side at old Dame Margery’s dying bed, soothing the terror of the dying woman, and pointing her for salvation to the cross on which her God had suffered. His clear, deep tones rose above the wail of the blast, even as above all the storms and temptations of life may be heard the “still,

small voice" guiding us on our way to heaven. The terror-stricken heart was calmed, the weak faith strengthened, and when at last Dame Margery fell asleep, it was with a smile on her face.

Three weeks after, as Lily White walked alone in the clear moonlight, a tall, stately figure joined her, and a rich, earnest voice murmured, "Lily White, I love you, as I never before loved woman. When I saw you standing at the rector's door, that dreadful night, I wondered that I had never before noticed your delicate and exceeding beauty. But it is not for that I love you. If every thread of your sunny tresses is dear as my own life, it is not because they are so beautiful in their golden hue; but, Lily, there was a bond to knit your heart to mine, in that night-watch, by the dying. I loved you then for your earnest faith, your sublime, fearless courage, your unselfishness, and strength of purpose. It is a love which would last, if the fair lily should wither on the stalk, and the graceful figure be bowed by age. Will you let me so love you, Lily? Will you be my wife?"

I did not hear Lily White's answer. I only know that when the harvest-moon smiled upon Ryefield she was poor and an orphan no longer. She slept upon a true heart, strong arms sheltered her, a fond voice called her name, and the bishop did n't leave Ryefield without getting married.

MY BLIND BABY.

SLEEP softly on thy mother's breast, my baby! Thou wilt have many a colder pillow, ere the banners wave and the bugles sound thy triumph in life's great battle.

Thou art beautiful, my darling! The curls lie soft and golden as pale bands of sunlight, above thy pure brow; the smile brightens round those lips, like moonlight over snow; and thy soft voice swells with music, like a shell from the Indian sea, when the southern wind breathes through it.

And yet there is a seal on thy blue eyes, when they are raised to mine. A faint shadow is upon them, as if the soul were struggling to gaze forth, and could not; as if thou wert too pure for earth, and thy glance could only soar upward for thy lost Eden.

For thee it is in vain that the winds blow the rye-fields into billows, or the sunshine lies soft and warm on the meadow-land. In vain that the violets purple dingles and hill-sides, or the blue sky is bluer than thine eyes. I cannot smile on thee, till an answer dimples into thy rose-heart checks, — my little girl is blind!

Woe to the life-path round which the clouds have so early settled! — to the heart which has so early been written desolate! Woe to my darling, when no longer thy mother's arm

can shield thee, no longer thy mother's hand can bear thee up! Woe to thee, when the green grass is growing, and the wild-flowers nodding over the heart beneath which thou hast lain!

And yet, why? Be still, O faithless, unbelieving mother's heart, — be silent! Is not the blue sky our Father's home? Is there not one eye which never slumbers? Has not one voice bidden the blind to see and the lame to walk, and yet do we dare murmur? Hush thee, baby! angels are whispering to thee in dreams; and when the dust is on my brow, and the sod upon my heart, thou shalt walk safely; for unseen hands shall guide thee, and the blue eyes, closed on earth, shalt be but brighter and purer in the sunlight of heaven!

A HUSKING-PARTY AT RYEFIELD.

- “ And when into the quiet night the sunset lapsed away,
And deeper in the brightening moon the tranquil shadows lay,
From many a brown old farm-house, and hamlet without name,
Their milking and their home-tasks done, the merry huskers came.
- “ Swung o’er the heaped-up harvest, from pitchforks in the mow,
Shone dimly down the lanterns on the pleasant scene below ;
The growing pile of husks behind, the golden ears before,
And laughing eyes and busy hands, and brown cheeks glimmering o’er.
- “ Half hidden in a quiet nook, serene of look and heart,
Talking their old times o’er again, the old men sat apart ;
While up and down the unhusked pile, or nestling in its shade,
At hide-and-seek, with laugh and shout, the happy children played.
- “ Urged by the good host’s daughter, — a maiden young and fair,
Lifting to light her sweet blue eyes, and pride of soft brown hair, —
The master of the village school, sleek of hair and smooth of tongue,
To the quaint tune of some old psalm a husking-ballad sung.”

WHITTIER.

“ Do you ever have husking-parties in Ryefield ? ” wrote a dear friend, the other day. The question awoke to life many a sweet memory of the olden time ; and this, my answer, must needs be a long one.

It was many years since, — that is, it seems so now, though to count them it would not be so very long, — that I passed my first

autumn in Ryefield. It had been a beautiful season, — so beautiful that we scarce had noted the summer putting away with pale hands her bands of flowers, and closing her dim eyes in death. The blossoms of the autumn had stood high and fair, — the asters, and golden-rods, and the patient laurels. The fruit hung heavily, and my life had been passing like the clear, ringing song of a summer bird.

It was late in mild October, and I had gone out to search for hen's eggs, — I was to have some pan-cakes, in the event of my success, and I was highly elated by the importance of my mission. I had climbed to the very highest beam, and was holding on with all my might.

“Holloa, Sis, what are you up there for?” I heard brother Frank's voice call, far beneath me; and, bending over, I peeped down upon him. “Sis, do come down, won't you, — there's a good girl!”

“I'm astonished,” I began.

“Astonished!” Frank cried, interrupting me; “well, I guess you would be, if you knew what I do; but I'm not going to tell you till you come down here.”

Of course my curiosity was stronger than my wish for pan-cakes, and I hurried down.

“Well, there, Lou,” said my brother, when I had safely “landed,” as he called it, on the floor, — “well, there, Lou, you just beat all for climbing, anyhow; — but what do you think, — they are going to have a party, to-night, over in Grandfather's barn!”

“A party in the barn, you stupid! — and who are they going to ask, — the horses?”

"No, no, Lou, I tell you we are going to have a real party in the barn. It's to husk the corn, you know; and then they'll go into the house, and get some of Grandma's pumpkin-pies. All the girls and boys are going, and mother says you and I can go over and stay all day, for perhaps Grandma will want us to run of errands for her."

"You don't say so, Frank! Girls and boys and pumpkin-pies! Glorious!"

In five minutes more, I had on my scarlet merino dress, and Frank his new jacket, and we were hurrying over the fields toward Grandpa's. O, what a dear old homestead was that brown, one-story farm-house! How cheerful and home-like the great, old kitchen always looked,—the strings of bright red peppers across the windows, the rows of polished pewter upon the dresser, and the broad old fireplace, with its brightly blazing logs!

"Good-morning, children," said Grandmother's pleasant voice, as we entered. "You've come to stay all day with me, I suppose?"

"Yes, ma'am," said Frank, "if you'll please not to send us home. We will do anything in the world to help you, if you'll let us."

"Well, well; I suppose you are hungry, an't you? Here are some little pies,—made on purpose for little folks, like you,—and then you can go into the long hall and see the tables."

Grandmother's tables! I wonder if ever there was anything else just like them? They were as good as a written character. You could see Grandmother there, unmistakably. They were

spread with snow-white cloths, and a place was left in the centre for the turkeys and the chicken-pies. All around stood the deep, old-fashioned china-plates, heaped up with every variety of *goodies*. There were custards and jelly-cakes, in immediate proximity to pumpkin-pies and plum-puddings. Then there were the great, red-cheeked apples, and the late October pears, just getting ripe and mellow.

O, what a long, happy day we passed ! now watching Grandma stuff the turkeys, and now running out to the great, old barn where Grandpa was helping his men to heap up the unhusked corn in the western end. And by and by, when night came ; when we had watched the great fire kindled in the uncarpeted, but nicely-sanded parlor ; when Grandma had put on her black-silk dress, and Grandpa his Sunday coat, we went into the barn to watch the coming of the guests, feeling well assured that we were the happiest children in the world.

Very soon Uncle Horace joined us. He was my father's youngest brother, at that time about twenty, and during the season of which I am writing the "schoolmaster" of the pleasant village of Ryefield. He had got through *trying to be terrible*, for this day at least, and made his way to his mother's pantry, where stood a reserve corps of pumpkin-pies, flanked by a cold chicken ; and now, having satisfied the cravings of the inner man, was whistling a merry tune as he joined us in the barn. I have always thought my Uncle Horace was one of the handsomest men I ever met. He was tall, and rather stoutly-made, with a full, open brow, curling hazel hair, and laughing hazel eyes. And then he was always so kind to us children, no wonder he was a favorite.

Very soon the company began to assemble. First came the old people and children, and after them the rustic beaux and belles, and — Mary Andrews. This latter was the belle, *par excellence*, of our little village. She was a saucy-looking gypsy of sixteen, with as bright an eye as ever flashed back sunlight, and as pretty a foot as ever trod the mazes of a country dance. She was quite an exception to all the other Marys I ever saw — an ar-rant little coquette as the moon ever shone on.

There was scarcely a young man in our village that had not been down on his knees for one of her jetty ringlets, and deferentially intimated that a marriage license would neither be beyond his means or his inclination. For the past six months my Uncle Horace had been the favored recipient of her “nods and becks and wreathed smiles,” and the gossips had already begun to look grave, and predict a wedding at the mansion of Squire Andrews. To be sure, Uncle Horace told us children that he had no such notion in his curly head, and that he would ask our permission “before ever he went courting;” but of course we did n’t believe him. Mary had on a new dress, on this eventful evening, — a large and very bright-colored plaid. They were just coming in fashion then, and it was n’t every one that could afford one; but Mary Andrews was a rich man’s daughter.

It was, perhaps, a little too showy for the occasion; still it was very becoming, and, if Mary’s object had been to excite the envy of the feminine portion of community, she succeeded admirably. They had all been assembled about half an hour, and of course Uncle Horace was sitting by Mary, and there were jokes, and smiles, and blushes; then there was a slight stir, occasioned by the entrance of a new comer.

I looked around. Grandmother entered first, and after her came a tall, thin lady, leaning on the arm of a slight, graceful girl.

“This is my old friend, Mrs. Lee,” said Grandmother, in her good, kind voice. “She moved into Honeysuckle Cottage a few weeks ago, and I persuaded her to come over here to-night, because this little girl of hers could not come alone, and I wanted all of you should get acquainted with Norah Lee.”

People’s sympathies move quicker in country places, reader; there are not so many folds of silk and velvet to bind down the heart; and the welcome extended to the pale widow and her child was as cordial as that of dear old friends. I learned their history afterward. Mrs. Lee, though much younger than my grandmother, had, at one time, been her schoolmate, and a strong friendship had sprung up between the kindly maiden and the sweet child. But my grandmother then married, and settled in another town; and, some few years after, her friend married James Lee, a wealthy New York merchant. Occasionally my grandmother heard of her—how, one by one, her seven children faded from her arms, until, at last, there was none left but Norah; and then there was a long interval of silence. My grandmother was serenely growing old in her pleasant home, and Mrs. Lee, moving in the midst of wealth and fashion, was anxiously watching the childhood of her one ewe lamb, her little Norah. But, a few weeks before the husking-party, my grandfather brought a new dress home, from a neighboring town, and around it was wrapped an old newspaper. Grandmother untied the bundle, and was folding up the paper with her customary thrift, when her eye fell upon the notice of the bankruptcy

and subsequent death of the wholesale merchant, James Lee, leaving his wife and daughter totally unprovided for.

Grandmother's letter-writing days were over long ago, and to sign her name even was a work of time ; but she would allow no hand but her own to pen the missive which offered Mrs. Lee the use of Honeysuckle Cottage, rent free, and besought her to make her future home in Ryefield. To be sure, Honeysuckle Cottage, romantic as its name sounds, was but a wee little moss-covered building, with two rooms, and an out-house for cooking and washing ; but it was snug and warm, and the rich merchant's widow thankfully accepted its shelter. At the time our brief sketch opens, she had been in possession of her new home about three weeks, and as yet few of the villagers had seen her. Even Uncle Horace had never been over there, and the sweet face of Norah Lee was as new to him as to any of us.

I have seen women, since then, whom the world called strangely beautiful ; proud, sultana-like beauties, that would make you hold your breath to look at them ; but never yet have I seen a face that my eyes deemed so fair as Norah Lee's. She was dressed in a plain, black frock, with high neck and long sleeves, and over this her rich, golden-brown hair floated in heavy ringlets. Her eyes were a clear, deep brown, large and soft as a gazelle's, and her brow was fair and pale as marble. She had such soft, white, dimpled hands, too, as had never before been seen in Ryefield ; and her look and smile were at once so appealing and sorrowfully gentle that our hearts went forth to meet her.

At least, I was pretty sure, then, that Uncle Horace's did, for something very like a blush passed over his cheek, and his

voice perceptibly softened, as her small white hand rested a moment on his broad palm ; and he said, very gently,

“ For our mothers’ sakes, let us be friends, Miss Lee.”

Norah answered all the salutations that were bestowed on her, with a calm gentleness ; and then, blushing timidly, she stole to a seat by her mother’s side.

“ I can’t get this husk off, Horace, it’s so tough ! ” said Mary Andrews ; and once more Horace was at her side, and they were chatting merrily as before. And yet, it was very singular, but I could not help noticing how often a glance would steal around to the quiet, golden-haired little Norah, in the corner.

At last the corn was husked, and Grandpa said, in his kindly voice,

“ Now, good friends, for supper ! ” and young and old rushed pell-mell toward the house.

“ Why, Louise, little girl,” said a big, and I thought very saucy boy, “ you need n’t make such great mouths at that very respectable turkey. He’s meant for older people than you.”

“ Here, Simon,” said his mother, laughing, reaching toward him a full plate of chicken-pie ; “ there’s supper enough for all of you, and so you can just let the little girl look hungry to her heart’s content.”

Brother Frank, I remember, was in every one’s way. He was evidently convinced that he was the most important personage of the whole company, and of course was sure to be just where his presence was least welcome.

“ Hey, old fellow ! enjoying yourself, I suppose ? We were rather sorry to have supper so late, on account of the old folks ! ” was his very respectful salutation to an antiquated bachelor, do-

ing his feeble best toward rejuvenation. Then to an elderly maiden lady, near at hand, "Well, Aunt Eunice, your new teeth look pretty well, but you got rather too dark-colored hair to look natural." But these were only little things. Altogether, the supper passed off very pleasantly, and when it was over a high degree of good humor prevailed.

Under its influence, the old people assembled themselves in Grandma's pleasant kitchen, and left the spacious parlor for the young ones; and then — but, dear reader, if you never assisted at an old-fashioned husking, not even my eloquence can give you any idea of it. The exercises, of course, opened with "Button, button, who's got the button?" and then there was "scorn," and "forfeits," and "tape to measure," and "skillets" and "gridirons" to be made, and, last of all, Uncle Horace contrived to be sent to Rome. Of course, every pretty girl in the room had to "pay duty," except Norah. I'm sure Uncle Horace was n't at all unwilling to kiss her; but the little one said, "Please don't, Mr. Cleveland!" so prettily, and turned away her blushing little face, and so of course he had n't the heart to do it.

Well, it was a merry husking-party enough; and it is indeed queer, but Mary Andrews went home with her parents, for Uncle Horace had a positive conviction that Mrs. Lee, as his mother's friend, required his first attention, and I never heard that he made the slightest objection to giving his other arm to Norah.

The winter passed very quickly. There were sleigh-rides, and apple-parings, and, O, such good times coasting! O, was n't it bright? — and there never was such a kind schoolmaster as Uncle Horace. He seemed just brimming over with happiness, and I

don't think he ever punished a single one of us. Then came the blue-eyed spring, flinging forth over the land the blossomy robes of her glory; and we were to have a May-pole on the green, and a pleasant picnic, the first of May. This was a time-honored custom at Ryefield. Last year Mary Andrews had been queen, and she had become her honors well; but we were thorough-going little democrats, and could not possibly bow the knee twice over to the same person; so, by universal acclaim, Norah Lee was chosen queen of the May. In vain Mary pouted, and shook down her jetty ringlets till they hid her flashing eyes; never was parliament more determined on carrying a measure into execution.

Early on May-day morning, we prepared our crown of roses and myrtle-leaves, and started for Honeysuckle Cottage. Already I had become, not prime minister, but prime favorite with the queen elect; so I left my companions, and hurried over to the cottage by a by-path through the fields, to apprize Norah of their coming. Gently I put aside, as was my playful habit, the honeysuckles from before the window, and looked in. Never shall I forget the beautiful picture on which my eyes rested.

In the first place, it was a pleasant room. The furniture was the only relic they had preserved of their old home in the far-off city. A light and cheerful carpet was upon the floor. The pattern was a running vine of roses and green leaves; and the curtains were of delicate, fleecy-white muslin. In the centre of the room was a round mahogany table, and on a smaller one at the window stood Norah's little inlaid writing-desk and work-box. The chairs were low and easy; and through the open door, at the end of the room, you caught a glimpse of a pleasant bed-

room, with its carpet of the same cheerful pattern, and Norah's little straw hat and blue ribbons lying on the white Marseilles quilt, which half covered the low but richly-carved rose-wood bedstead.

There was a *tableau vivant* in the little parlor. Three persons composed it. The first was Norah, looking more beautiful than I had ever before seen her. She had left off her mourning, and was dressed in a snowy muslin, confined at the waist with a blue sash. Her long golden-brown ringlets floated over her graceful shoulders, and half hid her blushing cheeks. At her feet was kneeling a gentleman, with full, open brow, curling hazel hair, and earnest, pleading hazel eyes — no other than my Uncle Horace. Leaning over them, stood the tall, graceful Widow Lee, with a hand on the head of each

“Yes, Horace,” I heard her say, “my daughter shall be yours, in the cool pleasantness of the Autumn. She is my all, Horace; promise me that she shall never miss a mother's tenderness.”

“God knows, dear madam,” said Uncle Horace, fervently, “that Norah's happiness will be ten thousand times dearer than my own; and she shall never want for anything my love or my toil can procure her.”

“I believe it,” said the Widow Lee, and tears were in her eyes; “I believe it, and God bless you both, my children!”

Looking back upon this scene, I am thankful that, graceless-child as I generally was, I did have the grace to leave the window, and only when I saw the rest of our party approaching the cottage did I go up to the door and tap timidly. Mrs. Lee herself opened it, and Norah, though there were tears in her

eyes and blushes on her cheeks, still received me with her accustomed gentle and affectionate welcome.

Norah was crowned queen of the May, and very fair and winsome she looked in her white robes, and her May-day garland. "Like an angel," Grandma said, looking out of the door, with tears in her eyes, as we passed the farm-house. Norah leaned, that day, on Uncle Horace's arm; and somehow every one seemed to know that they were betrothed, and that there would be a wedding at Honeysuckle Cottage in the early autumn.

Mary Andrews tossed her coquettish head, and flirted desperately with a handsome young physician; and yet Horace did n't seem to feel very badly. The picnic passed off delightfully. Grandmother was n't there in person, but she sent a representative, in the shape of a basket—large, fat, and round, like herself—containing a supply of the good food we so much loved. There were such nice waffles as nobody could bake but Grandma, and such tender cold tongue, and dainty, delicate slices of boiled ham, and such nice cakes and comfits. Truly Grandmother ought to have been appointed Her Majesty's Purveyor to the Household.

Then we had a dance, and Norah would dance with nobody but Uncle Horace, and Uncle Horace with nobody but Norah. O, it was a long, bright, beautiful day; and it was a long, bright, beautiful summer which followed it. The wild-flowers grew and brightened, and the wild birds sang, and the land was merry with the voices of children.

Norah could n't take very long walks, but Uncle Horace did not mind that much, for every evening found him sitting



THE MAY QUEEN



on a low stool at her feet, and she would pass round her neck the black ribbon of her guitar, and sing to him until the stars rose, and the moon shone down upon her white robe. She grew more and more beautiful. She had been pale formerly, but now a sweet, delicate rose-tint flushed her cheeks, and her eyes were strangely bright. When the early autumn came, her feet could no longer go forth over the pleasant paths they had trod together, and Mrs. Lee said, "Norah mustn't marry then — she must wait till she got stronger. She was n't very well now, but would be better soon."

And Norah smiled, and waited. She did n't suffer at all, she said, only felt languid; and she would sit all day in her low chair, or recline on the lounge by the window, with a calm, sweet face, more beautiful than ever. Uncle Horace reaped the waving grain, proud man as he was, with secret tears falling upon the sheaves. He would steal all the time he could, from the cares of his daily life, to sit by Norah's side, and hold her fair white hand in his. Books were not quite so plenty then as now, but it was an age of truth, and there was not much glitter that had not the ring of the true metal. He never wearied of reading to his "little darling," as he used to call her, the magnificent conceptions of Shakspeare, or the inspired pages of Scott, with their gorgeous word-painting. And Norah would smile, and look sweetly happy and contented. But, one day in pleasant September, I was all alone with her, and, looking up from her lounge, she said, "Louise, come here." I went, and kneeled down beside her. She had been for many days in an uncommonly playful humor, and I was startled to see tears on the fringes of her eyelids.

“I want to tell you a secret; — can you keep it?”

“O yes, yes — true as I live,” answered I, in the ready phraseology of childhood. She smiled mournfully, and then, parting my curls with her thin hand, she said,

“I am dying, Louise, fading with the leaves! They do not know it, and I would not have them. For myself, I do not care. There was a time when I longed to live — to pass my whole life by Horace’s side — to be his wife. I could not bear the thought of death. I rebelled against it. But I am a changed girl since I have been obliged to stay here in this little room. I have watched the sun set and moon rise, until, out of the clouds, I saw a great glory — Heaven seemed to come nearer, and the Highest Love overshadowed me.

“Now I am ready to go — I sorrow only for Horace; and I tell you this now, because you can remember it, in part, at least; and when I am gone, I want you to tell him. Tell him I knew that I was going, and all my sorrow was for him. Tell him to try and meet me beyond the clouds and the sunset; and that I want him to think of me, not sorrowfully, not as her who should have been the wife of his youth, but as a blessed spirit gone before him to heaven. Tell him to love some gentle one on earth, who will be all to him I could have been, and I will smile on him when the stars shine. I shall not be jealous. He will have love enough for both of us, when hope becomes fruition, and he sees my face in the far-off country. Tell him all this, darling, and you — but, dear child, are you crying? Was poor Norah loved so well?” And, drawing my head to her bosom, she soothed me with more than a mother’s gentleness, till tears subsided into sobs, and at last, wearied out

by the violence of my emotion, I fell asleep there, kneeling on the floor by her side.

But weeks passed on, and a change for the better seemed to have taken place. Norah's eye became less bright, her cheek less deeply flushed; and we almost thought our lily-flower would brighten and bloom once more with other lilies, in the sunshine of another summer. Horace talked hopefully of the sweet cottage he would build, and the roses and jasmine she should twine over its porch and windows, when she was well; "for you know you are better already," he would add.

Once more she passed over her shoulder the ribbon of her guitar, and played lively, cheerful airs; though she was too weak to sing much, but she would laugh and say, "I shall be singing in a few weeks, better than ever," *and we did n't believe her!*

Mrs. Lee's face brightened, and her steps grew quick and cheerful, and even Grandmother, when she used to come to the cottage, and bring the nice little things that Norah loved, would look at her with a smile on her kind, motherly face, and say that "it was a lazy little girl, who liked pëtting, and it must come over after its own cakes pretty soon." And Norah would laugh and reply that indeed she had n't much temptation to get well, when being a little sick made every one so good to her.

And now it was the last quarter of the October moon, and there was, according to time-honored custom, to be another husking-party in grandfather's barn. Grandma had objected to this, at first, for the sick one's sake; but then no one desired it so strongly as Norah. It would be so like the first night she came among them, she said; and though she could n't go to the

barn, she could, at least, be carried to the house, and taste some of the nice supper. And so we all thought, for she was certainly getting better very fast. And the preparations went on.

Once more the tables were set out in the long dining-room, and once more the board groaned beneath the choice array of tempting viands. The barn-floor was swept and garnished, and stored high with the golden corn. And at last the day dawned clear and bright, as it should have done; for I lay awake all night, every now and then rising, and going to the window to watch it.

Early in the morning, Uncle Horace went over to Honeysuckle Cottage, and brought back the intelligence that Norah wasn't quite so well, but still hoped to be able to come over. He was going back, he said, to spend the day. He would take her over, if she could come; and if not, stay with her. And the preparations went on.

Evening came, and with it the expected company. Mary Andrews, now the betrothed wife of the handsome young physician, came, leaning on her lover's arm. They were all there, young and old, and merriment was at its height. The corn was nearly husked, and we were about to adjourn to the house, when there was a stir at the door, and Uncle Horace appeared, pale and ghastly. He stood silently for a moment, looking upon us, like some terrible phantom; and then from his white lips fell the words — "Norah, Norah Lee is dead!"

There was one quick shriek of horror, and then Grandmother started, as fast as her trembling limbs would carry her, for the cottage. Our company hurriedly dispersed, some for their own homes, and some for the house of mourning. The fair girl had

been universally beloved, and the whole village wept. The supper was left untasted, and the viands of the party became the "meats for the burial,"—and *this* was the last "husking-party at Ryefield."

I wish I could tell you that Uncle Horace vowed eternal constancy to Norah's memory. But I must be truthful. Another gentle and dearly-loved one shares the little cottage he planned at the dead girl's side; and their child, who sits upon his knee at twilight, lifts to his face her sweet brown eyes and pride of golden hair, and sometimes the tears come to his eyes, as he calls her by her name—"Norah." But the mother is not jealous; she, too, is loved, and she knows, when a few more twilights shall have faded into night, they will all sit down together, in a land where twilight never comes nor shadows fall— even heaven !

SPRING-TIME RAIN.

ALL day long has the rain beat down,
Slowly beat on a lonely grave ;
All day long, 'neath the gray sky's frown
Beat like the flood of a briny wave.

Drops have beaded the meadow grass,
Drops have dashed on the willow-tree,
And the village children pattering pass,
A pleasant sight in the rain to see.

Flowers are bowing their heads at prayers,
Birds are ringing their vesper bell,
Monodies wild, and mournful airs,
From viewless harps of the wind-sprites swell.

Still, in a grave-yard lone and old,
Riseth a tomb-stone fair and white,
Pillar that sculptured seraphs fold,
Cloud by day and fire by night !

There, where the grave-mound groweth green,
Flowerets spring in the summer sun,
Roses and myrtle and eglantine
Weave a wreath round the white head-stone.

Settling down upon shining hair,
 Lieth the grave-dust dark and dim ;
Down on the brow that was once so fair,
 Mouldering round each snowy limb.

Never a fleck of the sunshine steals
 Into the grave they have dug so deep ;
Never a ray of the moon reveals
 The spot where an angel went to sleep.

But when the rain of the spring falls down,
 She comes from the world of living streams,
Lighting the earth-life bare and brown
 With rosy hues from the land of dreams.

By and by, when the days grow long,
 I will lay me down by her side,
Hushed to sleep by the wild-bird's song,
 Floating out on the even-tide.

MY AUNT PATIENCE.

It was a beautiful summer day. It seemed to me that Rye-field had never looked half so fair. The summer roses blushed and trembled like bashful maidens; and over the tall trees flitted gay, happy birds, all singing love-songs. But, perhaps, you have seen just such days, dear reader, when the blue sky seemed bluer, and the green fields greener, and your heart sang anthems of joy, to which all the world went keeping time. You have seen them, if you have loved as I loved, and known as I knew, that, when the earth slept in the peace of the summer afternoon, another shadow would fall beside your own, and a voice you loved make music in your ear.

That morning I had risen early. I wandered here and there, with the one dear name on my lips, gathering the lush-red strawberries, and sorting the pale, fragrant flowers into Grandmother's rich, old-fashioned china vases. At last I dressed myself, and descended to the library. It wanted yet four long hours of the time when he was to arrive; and I threw myself on a lounge, and closed my eyes, to spend the time as best I might in weaving dreams and fancies wherewith to furnish my hereditary "Castles in Spain." A light foot-fall, so light that it did not arouse me, passed over Grandmother's Wilton carpet; a soft hand was laid upon my brow, and, looking up, I saw that Aunt Patience was standing beside me.

She was a singular, and yet most interesting woman; and, hitherto, she had seemed to me as one dwelling apart from our common sympathies, and had won from me even more of curiosity than love. She was tall, and very slight, with soft, brown hair, banded smoothly about her pale face. She seldom spoke, and, when she did, her voice was low and calm, and her words fell upon the ear like the measured cadences of mournful music. And yet Aunt Patience had not always seemed thus. Grandma had told me of a time when her face looked less like the pictures of the saints, and more like one of Sir Joshua Reynolds' court beauties, full of human love and joy, ay, and of human error, too. She had told of a fair, smooth brow, shaded by masses of curls; of a slight, swaying, and graceful figure; clear, starry blue eyes; dainty little fingers, and a voice like civilized bird-notes. But Aunt Patience was very different now. I had never known what had occasioned the change; but, like those buried cities, round which not even tradition has wove her garment of memories, leaving them to the sceptre of that mightier potentate, the Imagination, I felt sure that Aunt Patience had a history.

Her very name seemed strangely appropriate. I don't think, in her whole life, she had ever been known to utter a murmur or complaint; and the very expression of her face was that of one who had suffered much, and grown purer under the pressure of the crown of thorns. I had many times thought she seemed to regard me with unusual tenderness; but I had judged only from the inflections of her voice and the brooding warmth in her quiet blue eyes. I knew it on this pleasant summer morning, when she stood beside me, with her hand upon my hair. "So you

think you love Wilton Mowbray, my little girl?" she said, inquiringly, yet very gently.

"Think! O, Aunt Patience, I know I love him! I would give my whole life to make him happy!"

"Well, child, I believe it; and yet I have seen in you a disposition to try his love, to excite his jealousy, to tyrannize over him; and I have felt that, loving him as you do, and acting thus, you were standing on the verge of a fearful precipice, and I have longed to warn you. My own heart has a history whose leaves no human eyes have ever read. Shall I tell it to you, this morning?"

There was a kind of dimness gathering in Aunt Patience's eyes, as she drew an easy-chair to the library-window, and commenced her story. I was lying upon the lounge, with my head in her lap, and her hand upon my hair.

"I have been much interested in your friend, Wilton Mowbray," she commenced, "very much interested, because he bears so close a resemblance to one I used to know and love. In his character and disposition, I mean, for his face is not at all similar. You have never before heard me speak of Walter Harding, the lover of my youth. He had precisely your Wilton's quick, sensitive, impetuous disposition; and I, though you would never guess it, was the exact counterpart of what you now are,—gay, lively, impulsive, and a little inclined to flirt. Withal, I had more than your share of pride; and yet I loved Walter as well as woman ever loved the one whom she chose from all the world to guide her trembling steps along the uneven paths of life, toward the great end. He was very fond of me,—much more so than I deserved. I saw that I had it in my power to annoy him,

and I think I used to take advantage of it. Many were the bouquets I accepted, and the smiles I returned, from others; and I have seen his cheek flush, and his lips tremble, until any other girl would have feared his anger; but I knew no fear, in those days. When it came time to return, I used to step up to him, and say, 'Are you ready, Walter?' He would look at me a moment, and then the frown would pass from his brow, and, drawing my hand through his arm, he would exclaim, in those dear, good tones of his, that it made one's heart rejoice to hear, 'God bless you, Patience, for a dear, cruel, tormenting little angel, as you are!' and then he would walk away with me, just as kind and tender as if I had been the best girl in the world.

"But there came a time when I tried my strength, and found it wanting. There was a young law-student in the village. Most persons called him handsome, far handsomer than Walter, though to me he certainly was not. All his airs and graces, clear, white complexion, and delicate hands and feet, were not worth to me one single, beaming, truthful look from Walter's dark eyes. And yet it suited my purpose to flirt with him, to appear fond of him. I always—that is, always when Walter was by—welcomed him with *empressement*, wore the flowers he gave me in my hair, and played his favorite songs. At last, one evening when Walter was with me, he came with a card for me to attend a ball, which was to come off the next evening. Cotillions were much more fashionable then than now, and this ball was to be a brilliant affair. Dancing was my passion; but Walter, who was studying for the ministry, never danced, and since I had known him I had almost entirely abandoned it. But here was afforded a fine opportunity to tease him, gratify my inordi-

nate love of fun, and constitute myself once more the belle of a ball-room. Heedless of Walter's sad, imploring face, I accepted the invitation, and Frank Stanley (that was the student's name) left almost immediately. After he had gone, there was silence between us for a long time. At last Walter broke it.

“‘I am sorry, Patience,’ he said, mildly, ‘that you should have carried your trifling quite so far. Of course you will not go to this ball, and it will disarrange Mr. Stanley's plans, and, perhaps, mortify him, to receive a note of regrets now!’

“‘And who says I shan't go to the ball?’ I asked, angrily, for my naturally quick temper was aroused by his tone of unwonted authority.

“‘Who says it, Patience? Why, I think your own innate good sense will say that the betrothed bride of a minister of the Gospel should not be found in the ball-room!’

“‘Well,’ I retorted, ‘my own good sense says nothing of the kind. It does say that, even if I've got to wear the surplice after marriage, it's very ridiculous of you to expect me to assume ministerial obligations beforehand. And it does say that nobody knows of our engagement now, and I don't want they should, for we can't be married in any reasonable time; and so it becomes a matter of necessity that I should go to this ball, for, of course, I could not give any excuse, without giving the true one.’

“‘Well, Patience,’ he said, with a calmness and forbearance that I hated then as much as I admired it afterwards, ‘well, Patience, I had not thought to learn that you are so much ashamed of your betrothal to me that, rather than have it known, you would commit what seems to me a sin, and what even you cannot regard as less than an impropriety; but, darling,’ and, as

he spoke, he gazed tenderly into my face with his dark eyes, and drew my proud, rebellious head to his bosom, 'my own darling, I will not chide you; I am so sure you did not mean it. You shall drive with me into the country to-morrow, and we will not return until it is too late for this affair.'

"'Shall I, indeed, Mr. Harding? Is it you who says "shall" to me? Pray remember the vow to obey is yet in the future. But surely you don't mean it, now? You wouldn't take my humble self into the country, would you? What a pity that I shall have to decline the honor!'

"'Patience,' he said once more, and this time his tone was very serious, 'Patience, answer me truly, do you mean to attend this ball?'

"'Yes, sir; I truly do mean to attend this ball!'

"'Then, Patience, I must tell you candidly what the result will be. It will terminate our engagement. I have loved you, God only knows how well, — to idolatry, I have feared sometimes. I have borne patiently with your caprices for a long time, suffered you to follow in all things your own inclinations, because I had a firm faith that your heart was right, and that, in spite of all, you truly loved me, and would seek to make me happy. But, if you cannot give up so small a thing as this foolish ball for my sake, — if you prefer its gaud and glitter to a day of quiet pleasure with me in the country, — then, alas! I must yield to the conviction that you never loved me, and go my own way in solitude.'

"'Louise, can you comprehend the enigma of my behavior? At that moment he seemed to me truly noble. I loved him more than ever. I would have given worlds to have thrown myself into his arms, and told him the simple truth, that one word of

love from him was worth more to me than all the balls and gayeties in the world. But, alas for it! that evil spirit of pride was regnant in my heart. I had tried his love before. I wished to test it yet once more, to make still another display of my power over him. So I masked my aching heart, with an air of haughty coldness, and answered, 'Well, sir, if I am henceforth to enter a state of serfdom, to have no will of my own, and if your boasted love for me is merely a desire to reduce my spirit to subjection, the sooner we part, and you go your own way, the better.'

"'Nay, Patience, my poor proud child, I will not take your answer now. You will see all this differently to-morrow. I do not think you will go to the ball; and I fancy we shall have, if not the ride into the country, at least a happy evening at home. I can't help thinking you love me, Patience; for I have a pleasant memory of a light step by my bed-side during the weary watches of a terrible illness, of a gentle hand upon my brow, and sorrowful blue eyes full of tears. Patience, your love has been more than life to me. I cannot give you up to-night. To-morrow, — we shall see, when it comes, what fate comes with it.' And he would have raised my fingers to his lips, but I crushed the dear hand and threw it from me; and he went out."

My Aunt Patience paused in her recital, and her tears fell fast upon my brow and my braided hair. "But you didn't go to the ball, Auntie?" I inquired, with eager interest.

"Yes, Louise! Morning came. I had passed a sad, restless night; but my pride was not one whit abated; and hardly to purchase my salvation would I have sat down and written to Walter that I would accept his invitation to go into the coun-

try. He never came near me all day, and toward night I began to dress for the ball. I brushed out the long curls which Walter so loved to twine around his caressing fingers, and crowned them with a wreath of starry cape-jasmine. I put on a dress of deep azure silk, which suited my complexion exquisitely. My arms and neck were bare, and a glance at my mirror assured me that I had never before looked so beautiful. Well, Frank Stanley came for me, and I went. I do believe I hated him then. Somehow my purblind vision could not or would not see my own faults, and unjustly I blamed him for coming between me and Walter. But I determined that I would at least seem happy; so I exerted myself to appear as lively as possible. My hand was engaged for every set, and I danced as gayly as if my heart had never experienced a single pang.

“It was nearly midnight when I threw a shawl over my shoulders, and wandered out by myself into the conservatory. My heart throbbed with a wild longing to hurry home, to seek Walter, and implore him to forgive the wanderer, and take her to his heart once more. Had I obeyed the impulse, all might yet have been well. I drew my shawl around me, and in a moment more I should have started; but I heard footsteps near at hand, and, looking up, Frank Stanley, my gallant of the evening, stood beside me. I did not hear half he said, but I managed to understand that he wished me to marry him. In the mood of remorseful tenderness toward Walter which then possessed me, I could scarcely listen to him with civility and, though I well knew that I had given him sufficient encouragement to warrant his proposal, my rejection was brief, haughty and almost bitter, unsoftened by a single word of esteem or regret. He stood before me for a

moment with compressed lips and frowning brow, and then recollecting himself, he smiled bitterly, and, offering his arm, said, 'At least I may hope for the honor of conducting you to supper, Miss Evelyn?'

"I took his arm in silence. His tone convinced me that I had made for myself a bitter, life-long enemy; and my conscience said, justly. O, that was a weary, wretched evening for me! I got home at length, and, tearing off the ornaments which mocked my misery, I threw myself upon a lounge, and sobbed myself to sleep.

"The next morning I heard the door-bell ring, and in a moment the servant entered my room. She held in her hands an exquisite little ebony casket, such an one as I had long desired to possess. I took it from her, and eagerly opened it. It was very beautiful, lined with quaintly-carved satin-wood, and soft, rose-colored satin; but I did not heed its beauty, or rejoice in its possession. It contained a little locket, with my miniature, which I had given Walter, and a few letters I had written him from time to time, when we chanced to be separated for a day or two. 'Mr. Harding bade me give you this,' said the girl, as she handed me a little note in his well-known chirography. I tore it open.

"'Patience,' it said, 'Patience, I have loved you as no other will ever love you again. But why do I use the past tense? I do love you as fondly as ever; but your course last evening has shown me that you do not wish to be my wife, and far be it from me to claim an unwilling bride. You will accept this little casket, won't you, Patience, as a parting gift? I have heard you wish for one like it, and I could not bear to see it, when far

MY AUNT PATIENCE.

away from her for whose use I intended it. I would fain have kept your picture and your letters, but I dared not. They were too dear. I leave town to-day, and I want to bid you good-by. Will you come down and speak to me? Dear, beautiful Patience, — treasure I once thought to call my own, — God bless you !’

“For a single brief moment of indecision, I held the letter in my hands. My heart pleaded wildly to go and kneel at his feet, and weep out my wrong and my penitence, and see if haply, even then, I might not be forgiven ; but pride triumphed. I drew my writing-desk toward me, and wrote :

“‘I am surprised, Mr. Harding, at the acuteness which enables you to divine my wishes so readily. I trust the attachment which can so easily relinquish its object will not be difficult to overcome. For your kindness in procuring me this casket, I am infinitely obliged ; but you must, of necessity, excuse my accepting it, as it is a present of too great value for a lady to receive from any but her lover. Enclosed you will find your miniature and letters, and a certain emerald ring, the pledge of a tie now broken. You will excuse me from coming down, as I have a head-ache this morning. I wish you God-speed on your journey, long life and happiness, and remain your friend,

‘PATIENCE EVELYN.’

“He left the house. I heard his quick tread upon the gravelled walk, and, throwing myself upon the bed, I wept such tears of heart-breaking love, and anguish, and penitence, as one can weep but once in a lifetime. He left the casket upon the table. It is

the only token I have of the fair past, whose paths my feet once trod. His letters, his miniature, the engagement-ring, all were gone. I have never seen him since. Others, rich and noble, knelt at my feet; but the love of my heart was crushed, and it never bloomed again. It is twenty years since that day, Louise, — twenty long, sorrowful years, — and not once have I failed to whisper his name in my prayers, though for half that time he has been the husband of another.”

“But surely, surely,” I cried, “he cannot love her, after all his love for you!”

“I do not know,” said my Aunt Patience, sadly. “I hope he loves her; I hope they are happy. I have prayed that they might be. He must have deemed me unworthy of a thought. I have told you this sad story, dear child, that you might take warning by my errors. I have seen in you the same spirit that has ruined the happiness of my own lifetime. Pray God that you may never carry with your own hands such desolation into all your future.” And, with a soft kiss upon my brow, Aunt Patience glided from the room. How I had wronged her! — I, who had thought her cold, thankless and unloving. How my heart did homage to the mute, uncomplaining forbearance of her mighty sorrow!

•Reader, my story has a sequel. That afternoon, as we sat in the dining-room, luxuriating over Grandmother’s delicious early tea, Wilton Mowbray said, as he thoughtfully swayed his teaspoon back and forth, “Louise, did I ever tell you of a kind friend of mine, the Rev. Walter Harding? He is such a gentle-

man, I'm sure you'd like him, — a nice, middle-aged man. He lost his wife a few weeks since; a noble, excellent woman she was; but I don't think he feels her loss as much as if they had had more sympathies in common. He knows of our engagement, you mad-cap, and somehow he has got the idea in his head that you have common sense, and know enough to choose a companion for his only child, a sweet little girl, with large, thoughtful eyes, like her father's own."

"How would I do?" said Aunt Patience, looking up from her tea, with her calm, pale face.

"You, Aunt Patience!" and Wilton smiled; "why, you would do capitally; but surely you would n't leave your home, and go there in the position of half-governess and half-companion?"

"Yes, Wilton. I used to know Walter Harding, and for the sake of our old friendship, I will gladly take care of his child; on the one condition, that you will not let him know who I am. My name is Patience Cleveland Evelyn, and he must only know me as Miss Cleveland."

When we chanced to be left alone, I clasped my arms round my aunt's neck, and exclaimed, joyfully, "O, I am so glad! Now you will marry Walter Harding, after all; and O, you'll be so, so happy!"

But it was a pensive smile with which my aunt answered me, and she said very calmly, "O, no, Louise. You have jumped at a very unwarrantable conclusion. When I parted with Walter Harding, I was eighteen years old, — almost a child, — and very handsome. Twenty years have passed since then, and the faded and sorrowful woman of thirty-eight bears no trace of the

maiden of eighteen. No, dear child, Walter Harding will never recognize me. I am going to him because I did him a great wrong once; and, if I can make some slight amendment by bestowing on his child a mother's care, I will bless God for the privilege!"

Walter Harding met his old love without one single faint suspicion that the quiet, middle-aged lady before him had ever crossed his path in earlier years. He never dreamed that head had lain in other days "upon his breast, or that small hand trembled in the caressing love-clasp of his own. To him, she was his daughter's governess, and no more. And yet she was ten times worthier of his love than in those other days, when it had been his proudest ambition to call her his own. Her heart had been chastened and subdued by suffering, her mind matured and expanded by time and culture, and her whole character elevated by the beauty of holiness. She devoted herself to her little charge with all a mother's tenderness, and Winnie Harding soon learned to love the gentle stranger even more fondly than the lost mother, who had manifested far less sympathy in her childish joys and sorrows.

One night, when my aunt had spent about six months in the family, she rose from her seat at the usual hour, to put the little Winnie to bed, when her old lover laid a detaining hand upon her arm. "Miss Cleveland," he said, "will you not return again to the parlor? I have a new poem I wish to read you." "Certainly, sir, if you would like," was the reply; and she passed out of the room. I believe there was a thrill at her heart, that night, as she heard the little one say her prayers, and then sang her to sleep. I think her hand trembled as she lifted

the latch, and, for the first time in years, entered alone the presence of him she used to love so fondly. The poem he wished to read was *Evangeline*, and his masterly intonation made that beautiful history of a faithful love, long disappointed, and rewarded at last only in death, strangely musical. When he concluded, he looked at his companion, and her eyes were dim with tears.

“Do you know, Miss Cleveland,” he asked, suddenly, “do you know those blue eyes of yours have a look in them strangely like those of one I knew and loved once? Once, did I say, — I love her yet, — I have always loved *Patience Evelyn*, and always shall. I heard, years ago, that she was married to another, but I have never ceased to love her as of old; and sometimes I have felt almost sure that she would come back to me. You remind me of her in more ways than one. It is singular, very singular, isn't it? but sometimes I have fancied your voice was like hers, particularly when you were animated at anything. I have dreamed, too, that, if you would promise to stay with me, and share my life always, I might be happy once more, — as happy, almost, as she would have made me. I suppose we are both too old now for vows and protestations, but I do believe I love you truly; and you, Miss Cleveland, — will you share the old man's home?”

My aunt had listened in joy and wonder; but when he closed, her cheek was suffused with blushes, her eyes with tears. She threw herself at his feet, and, when he would have raised her, she cried, impulsively, “No, no; let me kneel! It is time I knelt at *Walter Harding's* feet, and besought forgiveness of the true heart I have twice won. *Walter*, do not hate me! I am

Patience Cleveland Evelyn! I never married, never loved another, Walter; and even when we parted, my heart was breaking for your love. Can you forgive me, Walter?"

I suppose my Aunt Patience pleaded not vainly, for when next I saw her she was Walter Harding's wife; his child was clinging to her knees and they were happy!

DOMESTIC ECONOMY.

WE have learned something new, this week,— new to us, at least,— that it's really a *bona fide* disgrace for a young lady to do house-work. Why, she may toil till her delicate fingers are blistered in rolling nine-pins; she may walk over half the streets in the city, or fatigue herself with music-lessons for which she has not the slightest taste; but, if she would not lose caste, let her avoid the kitchen, as she would a pestilence. No matter how the beaded drops of sweat may stand on her mother's brow; no matter how that mother's wearied head may throb, or her tired limbs ache for repose! You may pity her, you may be very sorry,— I don't know as that's unfashionable,— but beware how you lift her burden with the tips of your fingers!

No matter how bewitching may be that little close cap tied over your rich hair, how neat and pretty the little white apron which you are fastening over that gingham morning-dress,— take them off, throw them away; for it's "so unfashionable" to be seen in the kitchen, and a fashionable acquaintance might chance to enter, and discover you in those badges of the disgraceful occupation!

No matter how your heart aches to see that mother looking so tired, no matter how your own enfeebled frame gives evidence of a want of exercise; 't will never do to be unfashionable!

For exercise, you can go to a party, and dance half the night; after all, your mother can but die, and the cold church-yard sod will lie soft above that throbbing brow, and for earth's weary ones there is a glorious rest in heaven!

We did n't know, till now, that " 't wouldn't do " to take practical lessons in domestic economy; and we have some dim, shadowy recollections of the theory of clear-starching and ironing, and dusting parlors, that we shall very carefully conceal, lest they should disgrace us forever in the eyes of fashionable society. We used to think women — I beg Mrs. Grundy's pardon, ladies — looked very lovely when they were trying to lighten some dear one's toil, and flitting round, like a birdie in the home-cage, with a gush of song trilling on their bright lips; but, O dear! of course we must change our opinion now, since we are taught that it is so dreadfully old-fashioned. Even the Bible is getting now-a-days to be considered in some circles an old-fashioned book,— very nice in its way, to be sure, but then so old-fashioned, just suited to the days of spinning-wheels and home-made linen.

Were it not for this, we might have suggested King Solomon's picture of a good wife; but that, you know, is out of date now. People are not expected to be wives, but brides and married ladies.

Though, to be sure, we never could have learned all this alone, unaided, we never should have invented the nice distinction by which it becomes proper and fashionable for a father or brother to toil in his counting-room like a very slave, but dreadfully *outré* for a young lady to go in the neighborhood of a furnace or frying-pan!

To be sure, had no one informed us, we should have thought it the better way to strive to scatter fresh heart-flowers in the path where dear feet must walk, and lighten the toil of one we loved, by the help of fair, white hands; but, now that we have learnt better, we are amazed to see what an ignorant little body we were; and we take this opportunity to impress it on your minds, fair readers, that you can violate the spirit of every commandment in the decalogue with more impunity than you can in the least degree venture to be unfashionable!

LAURA TO PETRARCH.

ALAS, alas ! bound by a tie I hate,
And forced to call the man I scorn my lord,
Thou canst not wonder that I curse my fate,
And wildly dream about each blessed word
In golden days of old spoke by thy lips,
While Cupid lurked 'mong beds of passion-flowers,
Ere yet my life's sunshine had met eclipse,
Or I had measured with my prayers the hours !

Thou canst not wonder that, in looking back,
I pour out blood for tears along the path,
And sprinkle drops upon each once fair track,
Now blackened by the Simoom's deadly wrath.
And yet, O, what am I, that make my moan ?
A woman, with her hair to silver turned ;
A bird, whom all its mates have left alone ;
A vase, whence all the roses have been burned !

A seed left choking in some stony ground,
I fittest liken to my wretched plight ;
A cry, a moment heard, then deeply drowned,
By dash of waves, on Pluto's shores of night !
I see thee climbing up Fame's rugged height,
And know thy heart sends after mine a cry,
As traveller, in some fairy land bedight,
Amid its flowers gives utterance to a sigh !

The bridal-roses, bound about my brow,
A crown of thorns I wear for thee this hour ;
The winter moon, slow-sailing, lights thee now,
While o'er my path fierce waves of baptism lower.
Time was, I decked my heart and spread my feast,
And called thee gayly to my rustic board, —
As sceptred monarch, in the far-off East,
Shows to some cherished guest his glittering hoard.

And thou didst come : that simple feast the last,
Those words of love the only glory left,
Of all the mocking radiance of the past,
To gild the life of hope and light bereft.
But, as the dead Christ crowns some funeral pile,
And crosses gleam through mists of vanished years,
So I will give my life to shrine thy smile,
And pave thy future with my woman's tears !

THE SCOTCH PASTOR'S BRIDE.

“COME hither, Annie;” and Lord Maxwell’s fair daughter glided to his side, and sat down on a stool at his feet. It was a pleasant scene,—that quaint old drawing-room, with its dark cornices of richly-carved oak, its chair-covers and tapestry wrought in the most approved fashion of our grandmothers’ days, its black-walnut reading-desk with the large family Bible chained on it, and the hassock standing before it on which Lord Maxwell’s chaplain, the young and godly George Herbert, was wont to kneel at hours of morning and evening prayer. In a high arm-chair sat Lord James Percy Maxwell, a worthy representative of the gentleman of the old school, with his flowing wig, his bright knee-buckles, and blue coat and golden buttons. At his feet nestled the sweet and winsome Annie.

We are sorry, for the romance of the thing, dear reader, that we cannot tell you Annie Maxwell was peerlessly beautiful; but we must content ourselves with saying, in broad Scotch, that “she was a sweet and sonsie lassie.”

Her eyes were very blue, and their gentle mirth was softened into a look of demure propriety by their long, golden fringes. Her brow was neither high nor low, though it was sweet and womanly; and her hair, of a rich brown, was brushed smoothly away from her sunny face, and knotted behind with a

black ribbon. Her close-fitting dress of blue merino suited exquisitely well her clear, soft complexion; and, altogether, she was as winsome, cheery a little maiden as ever graced hall or cottage; and so thought Lord Maxwell, as, with her hands crossed over his knee, she sat and looked into the fire.

“Annie, pet bird, how would you like to be married?” The girl said nothing, but the blush deepened on her cheek, and a half-smile played about her rose-bud mouth. “Say, darling, would you not like to be mistress of some stately castle, and be guided through life by some kindly hand?”

“Nay, father, dear,” — and now the smile faded from about her lips, — “nay, father, ask me not to leave you; do not send me away from Maxwell Grange, for I fain would dwell here always!”

“Nay, darling,” — and, with a fond pride, he smoothed back her sunny hair, — “nay, but you must leave me some time, or, Annie,” — and his voice grew solemn, — “some time I must leave you, and I would not that it should be to loneliness. Annie, my child, I am an old man, and must soon die.”

But she twined her white arms round his neck, and besought him not to leave her, his motherless girl.

“Nay, dearest, be calm,” and he gently put her from him. “Nay, love, I must leave you; and, Annie, will you not let me leave you the wife of Lord Say? He is good and noble, and the proudest earldom in England would be his wedding present to his sweet Scotch bride! He has been to see me again to-day, and I have promised my influence in his favor.

“You are twenty-two now, dear child, and I fain would see

you happily married before I die; — look up, Annie, and tell me you will be Lady Say.”

But her only answer was a gush of passionate tears, as she hid her fair head on his bosom.

“Annie,” — and this time his voice trembled, though one could not tell whether with grief or anger, — “Annie, do you love another?” Still there was no answer, but the flush deepened on the maiden's cheek, and the long lashes drooped over her tearful eyes.

“You do, Annie! Who is the wretch that has dared to steal that innocent heart? Speak, child; your father commands it!”

And this time the maiden spoke. Rising from his arms, she stood erect, her slight figure drawn to its fullest height. “Father, he is no wretch, no villain! — I love George Herbert!”

“George Herbert, forsooth!” and the proud man looked at her fiercely, as if he would have dashed her from his sight. “And so he is the pitiful traitor who has stolen into my house, in Christian garb, to ruin the happiness of my innocent child? Villain! — but he shall answer for this!”

“Father,” — and the young girl stood before him, her white hand laid upon his arm, and his own haughty spirit looking forth from her clear blue eyes, — “Father, George Herbert is no traitor; — never has he said to me, by word or act, that he loved me; and, if I love him, 't is because, seeing how good and noble he is, I cannot help it; and, should he never love me, I will go down to my grave unmarried; for I love him, and, as God hears me, I will marry no other!”

“And, as God hears me, you shall marry Lord Say!”

“Never!” and Annie Maxwell’s lips seemed to move involuntarily.

“Hear me, girl, hear me! If you do not make up your mind to wed Lord Say within ten days, then will I turn George Herbert from my door, and drag you to the altar by force, if it must be so; for the word of a Maxwell can never be broken!” and, turning away, he entered the door of his own room, and locked himself in. O, how many times, in after years, did James Maxwell regret those harsh words! How many times did his brow throb, and there was no gentle hand to lave it; his heart ache, and there was no soft voice to whisper words of consolation!

Annie Maxwell turned away, with her heart swollen almost to bursting, and, ascending the long, oaken staircase, entered George Herbert’s study. The young pastor sat there, his head buried in his hands, and seemingly busied in intense thought. Annie stole gently to his side, clasped her arms about his neck, and, pressing her lips to his brow, murmured, “George, you love me; I cannot tell how I learned it, but I know it; and I have come to give myself to you, to ask you if you will indeed call me your little wife. George, dearest, tell me!” and she sank into his arms.

For a full moment, George Herbert held her there in that embrace; then, brushing back her sunny hair, he looked into her eyes, and spoke:

“Annie Maxwell, you have well said;—I do love you more than all things else,—more than life itself. God knows how I love you, Annie, but I thought not to have told you this;—the vows of God are upon me, and I cannot do so great wickedness as to ask your father’s daughter to share a lot so far beneath

her!" and he put her mournfully from him, and bent his eyes upon the floor.

"O, George, you will not cast me off!" and Annie Maxwell knelt on the floor at his feet, and told him of Lord Say, and her father's fierce words and determined threat. George Herbert knew Lord James Maxwell well; he knew that he would do all he said; and he raised Annie from the floor, and whispered, "Go down to the library, dearest,—I will be with you soon; this is a hard matter, and I dare not decide without much thought and prayer.

And for two weary hours George Herbert knelt in fervent supplication in his little study, and Annie Maxwell sat the while in the library down stairs, weeping—not noisily, not wildly, but quietly, and very still—the bitter tears of an unutterable anguish.

At last the door opened, and George Herbert entered, and, folding her to his heart, pressed his lips to hers in a first, fond passion-kiss, and whispered, "My own, my dearest—my little wife—look up, my sweet one, for already I feel that God has given thee to me. Sad as 't will be for thee to wed against thy father's will, 't would be worse, ay, ten thousand times worse, for thee to do such solemn mockery as give thy hand where thy heart goes not with it. 'T is but a humble lot I have to offer thee, my darling. I have a brother, who is vicar of a small and poor country parish; he will understand me, and believe that I am acting aright. I can be his curate. Say, Annie, darling, canst thou be a poor curate's wife?—thou, a nobleman's daughter,—my own, my beautiful!" Very trustfully sweet Annie Maxwell laid her hand in his, and answered,

like one of old time, "Where thou goest I will go; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God!" and once more he caught her to his heart, as he whispered, "Then, dearest, we will go forth to-night!"

It was a humble wedding, that of gentle Annie Maxwell, in the small country church of St. John.

There were no diamonds on her brow, no orange-blossoms in her hair, and no delicate and costly veil floating over her like a cloud. You would have been puzzled to tell what were the "worldly goods" with which George Herbert had vowed to "endow" his beautiful bride, as he led her into her new home—a little white cottage, over which the woodbines and climbing roses had wrought out a fairy poem.

And here sweet Annie Maxwell reigned, undisputed mistress both of her bird's-nest home and the heart of her husband. For a time Lord Maxwell had searched for her, but, on hearing of her marriage, he immured himself in his castle, a prey, some said, to regret; others, to a proud, fierce shame, that he had been compelled to forfeit his plighted word to the bold Lord Say. Lord Say brought home another bride, on short wooing, and the world jogged on as of old.

There were just as many tears in it as before,—just as many sighs,—but there was more happiness; for, in a sweet nook, far away from the din of the great world-life, George Herbert and his Annie rejoiced in their pure young love.

They were poor, and it made his heart ache sometimes that his sweet bride must lead a life so different from that to which

she had been accustomed ; and yet his eyes kindled with joy, to see her bright face, as she went dancing about his home like a fairy, or to hear her merry voice, instructing the good-humored Scotch lassie, who was the only assistant in their simple *cuisine*.

And their evenings, — O ! what happy hours they had then ! In the morning there was housekeeping to attend to, and sermons to write ; in the afternoon, callers to be entertained, and parishioners to be visited ; but the evenings — ah ! then they had only to be happy. How proudly George would smile, when he had drawn the round study-table before the brightly-blazing fire, and wheeled the study-chair beside it, and his sweet wife would come and lay her head on his bosom, sometimes smiling, sometimes, all too intensely happy even for silent smiles, she would look into his eyes, with the bright joy-tears trembling on her long lashes ! And there they would sit, with the fire-shine brightening over them, and the kitten lying at their feet and purring.

Sometimes he would lay her fair head back on his shoulder, and sing to her, till her heart went beating time to the music of his voice ; and then she would talk to him, in her own sweet tones, of all things good and beautiful, — of poetry, and the wondrous songs that fairy whispers seemed trilling through the cloisters of her own pure spirit.

And, at last, they would kneel together, with his fond arm clasping her, and bless God for all this happiness ; and though their earthly father was far away in the gloom of his stately castle, love-rays floated over them from the throne of their Father in heaven, — angels watched over them, and they slept like the blest !

Time passed on, and another visitor came to gladden their

little circle, — a very tiny one, indeed, but, O, so dear! and now their evenings were merrier. How proudly the young father held his little Liliás; and Annie — O! love had smiled all the jealousy out of her heart, and she heeded not that another occupied her old, time-won place in her husband's arms.

And when, at nine o'clock, the nurse came to take the sweet Lily away, what kisses and blessings and good-nights there were! and then, as in the old time, would the girl-wife nestle fondly in her husband's bosom.

Three years passed by, and Liliás had grown strangely beautiful. She inherited her father's classically regular features, and her mother's deep, soft eyes, and golden hair. Hers seemed "a face to look upon, and pray that a pure spirit keep her." She loved the beautiful, too, with all her mother's passionate devotion; and would sit for hours in her little high chair, drawn to the window, and look forth, with her spiritual eyes, over the waving woods and distant mountains, rising, dim and soft, up into the clear blue sky, until Annie would almost tremble lest she should see angel-faces in the clouds, and hidden voices should call her away from the earth-land.

But, no, — she lived, grew, and brightened before them, until now she was nine years old; and, by a succession of providential events, George Herbert had been called to the pastoral charge of the church at which Lord Maxwell was an occasional attendant. The young clergyman had looked forward with dismay to the prospect of meeting the grim old lord; but they had been settled in their new abode for three weeks before they saw him.

One evening Lily and her nurse went forth for a long walk over the hills.

The girl had left the beautiful child for a few moments, in order to exchange a few words with an old friend ; and the sweet Lily had wandered onward, till she thought herself lost, and, sitting down by the road-side, wept bitterly.

Presently a carriage stopped before her, and an old gentleman alighted, who, apparently, had been attracted by her beauty.

“ Why do you cry, dear child ? ” he asked, at the same time caressingly brushing back her curls.

“ Because, please, sir, I am lost ! ” and the little maiden looked up into his face with her spiritual eyes.

“ Well, dear child, will you go with me ? I have nobody to love me, and I will give you a beautiful castle, and pearls, and diamonds, and pictures.” The sweet child had never heard of pearls or diamonds ; but she had seen a castle, and she thought pictures must be pleasant things, because Mamma had said that their new home, at Sutherland rectory, looked like a picture ; and the old man’s words seemed very beautiful.

But she thought a moment, and answered, “ No, thank you, sir, I cannot go with you ; Papa would cry so, and then I must go home, and say my prayers at Mamma’s knee.” And, as she spoke, there was a music in her voice which thrilled the old man’s heart strangely, and made him wonder he had not noticed it before. Almost mechanically he asked, “ And what do you pray for, little one ? ” more for the sake of hearing her voice again, than from curiosity as to what would be her answer.

“ For Ma, sir, and Pa, and Grandpa ! ” and she smiled into his face with her large, trustful eyes.

“ And what do they call you, child-angel ? ” and he lifted her fondly to his bosom.

“Lilias Herbert is my name, sir, but Papa calls me his Lily.”

“My child, my child!” and the old man covered her sweet face with tears and kisses, as he told her he was that unseen grandpa for whom she had prayed these many years.

The fair Lily looked at him, with all the innocent trust of childhood, and whispered, “Please, sir, won’t you go to see Mamma?”

“Yes, child-angel, I will go to see your mamma, and you shall all come and live at Maxwell Grange”

And so the sweet child was carried home in that handsome carriage, and the old man raised his Annie, when she would have knelt at his feet, and whispered, “It is I that should ask you to forgive, but I will not; I’ll only ask you, darling, if you’ll come again, and gladden the old man’s home?”

And there were tears, and smiles, and joyful kisses, and once more Annie Herbert’s gay laugh echoed through Maxwell Grange; and little Lily went roaming over its broad halls, in her snow-white garments, like a beautiful spirit.

O, what a blessing seemed to brighten all their lives! and the proud old man learnt lessons of wisdom and purity from the little one whose white arms were wreathed about his neck.

One evening, George and Annie left them together, — the old man and the beautiful child-angel, — and sought the little study which had witnessed their first, strangely-spoken vows of love.

There was a bright fire burning, as in the old time, and the old books were neatly ranged, their gilded lettering glowing in the fire-light; and still, as then, George Herbert sat in the old study-chair; but this time he did not put his Annie from him: there she lay, her head resting on his bosom, peacefully as an infant in

its mother's arms. They had been speaking of the old time, and George had been recalling all the fond pride with which he had watched his bustling little wife in those early days, till a tear glistened in Annie's eyes, as she answered, "Ah! dearest, I am happy with you, and Lily, and father, in my dear old home; but the jewels he has given me are not half so sweet as the roses you used to twine in my hair; and, amid all my after life, memory will never sing me a pleasanter tune than those dear old chimes of our love in a manse."

THE NEW-YEAR'S NIGHT OF THE UNHAPPY.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF JEAN PAUL RICHTER.

AN old man stood in the New Year's midnight, at his window, and looked with the eye of a long despair up to the immovable, always blooming sky, and down on the still, pure white earth, on which now there was no one so joyless and sleepless as he. Then his grave drew near to him ; it was only concealed by the snow of age, not by the verdure of youth ; and he had brought out of the whole rich life nothing but the errors, sins and sickness, of an enfeebled body, a desolated soul, a breast full of poisons, and an old age full of remorse.

His beautiful youthful days came back to him to-day as spectres, and led him far away back again to the fair morning, when his father first set him out upon the highway of life, which, to the right, leads upon the sun-path of virtue, into a wide and quiet land, full of light and harvests, and full of angels ; and which to the left leads down into the mole-path of vice, into a black cavern, full of dripping poisons, full of serpents ready to dart upon their prey, and full of dismal, close exhalations. O ! the serpents hung around his breast, and the poison-drops to his tongue, and he knew not where he was.

Beside himself, and with unspeakable grief, he cried out to Heaven : " O, give me youth again ! O, Father, set me out once more upon the highway, that I may choose the other path ! " But his father and his youth were past long ago ! He saw *ignes*

fatui dance over the marshes, and go out upon the grave-yard, and he said, "They are my foolish days!"

He saw a star shoot from heaven, shimmer in its fall, and vanish on the earth. "That is me!" said his bleeding heart, and the serpent-fang of remorse dug deeper into the wounds. His glowing imagination revealed to him tottering sleep-walkers on the roof; the wind-mill raised its arms, threatening to crush him; and a mask, which had been left in the empty charnel-house, by degrees assumed his own features.

Suddenly, in the midst of the struggle, the music of the new year flowed out of a tower near at hand, like the distant sound of a church-anthem. His mind became calmer. He looked up to the horizon, and out over the white earth; and he thought on the friends of his youth, who, now happier and better than he, were teachers on the earth, fathers of happy children, and blessed of men, and he said, "O, I might also have slumbered, with closed eyes, on this first night of the year, if I had willed it! O, I might also have been happy, you dear parents, had I fulfilled your New-Year's wishes and instructions!"

Amidst these feverish reminiscences of his youth, it appeared to him as if the mask, with his features, stood up in the charnel-house; and, at last, by means of that superstition which, on New-Year's eve, sees ghosts and future events, it was changed into a living youth.

He could look at it no more! He veiled his eyes; a thousand hot tears streamed dissolving into the snow, and still he sighed, but very low, beside himself, and grief-stricken, "Come again, only once, O youth; come again!"

And it came again; for he had only dreamed so bitterly, in

the New-Year's midnight. He was still a young man; only his wanderings were no dream. But he thanked God that he, still young, could turn back from the dark track of vice, and set out again upon the sunny path of virtue, which leads into the fair land of harvests.

Turn with him, young reader, if thou standest on his path of error! This fearful dream will some time become thy reality; but, if once thou shalt cry, full of anguish, "Come back to me, beautiful days of youth!" ah, they will come back never again!

FANCIES FOR LOULIE.

WINSOME, fairy, darling child !
Pure of heart and undefiled,
With the rings of sunny hair
Lying on thy forehead fair,
Like the light we see in dreams,
Resting on enchanted streams.

Visions of thy future years,
Shadows from their loves and fears,
Rest upon my trembling soul,
As thou near'st the shining goal,
Where the woman and the child
Blend in girlhood sweet and mild.

Many a streamlet fair and blue,
Many a flower of radiant hue,
Many a magic mountain green,
Many a broad field; lies between
Now and then, sweet child, to thee,
Loulie and her destiny.

Many a love-dream sweet and fair,
Many a rosary of prayer,
Many a broken link and chain,
Rent apart with throbs of pain
(On the road which thou shalt pass)
Gleam like stoles at midnight mass !

Darling, fairy, sweet Loulie !
Let the future's mystery
Bring no heritage of care
To that brow, so young and fair ;
For the angels sentry keep
O'er thy soul's enchanted sleep.

AGNES LEE.

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

CHAPTER I.

I LIKE this strange morning on which I am writing ; this sunless, rainless day ; the all gray sky, the phantom wind, stealing over the hills with its ghostly feet, and now and then stopping to blow some fearful, shrieking blast. I like it ; for it comes to me like a memorial. I sit still, holding my breath, with my hand clasped tightly over my eyes, and think of high, fierce tides, tramping in upon low lee-shores, of alarm-guns sounding among the breakers at midnight, and the pale moon over head, stretching out her arms, and fighting fiercely with black, pursuing clouds.

Some one has said there are moments which command our lives, — moments, looking back upon which, we can see where a single half-hour might have changed our destinies. Every one's life has such points, that rise, pyramid-like, above the dead level of the years ; and I am going back to one, this morning.

You would think me very old, could you see me now. The smooth gray hair is folded back under my quaker cap, like bands of silver ; and over my face are drawn deep, furrowed lines, the footprints left by lonesome years in their tireless journeyings. I

am old, when I count my life by incidents ; and yet not so very old, when I tell it over in years.

I do not know how far back I can remember. Sometimes I seem to have dim visions of a fair southern home. Bright flowers seem blooming round me ; and southern breezes make sweet music, touching with their invisible fingers Æolian harp-strings. Standing there, the soft eyes of beautiful pictures smile on me, or the still form of some old marble hunter rises up in solemn state at my side. It is a pleasant country, though I see it very dimly through mists of years ; and I am not quite sure, after all, whether it be anything more than a floating island of fancy. It seems little else, on mornings such as this. I can go back to it, and bind my brow with its flowers, in the calm, pleasant days of midsummer, when I sit in my low chair before my cottage door, and round me the wild birds sing, the summer flowers blossom, and the sweet south wind lifts lovingly my silver hair.

But it is different now. This sobbing, lonely November morning, I see no fair and sunny scenes, no southern palaces, or soft-eyed pictures, but back to my heart comes the first deep, vivid memory of my life, stern, crushing, terrible !

It was a strange scene ; you may have read of such, but God grant they may never have dawned on your own life, never have made your hair stiffen, or chilled the blood in your veins. I was very small, I know, for I had been playing on the deck of a stately ship, handed around, baby-like, from one to another. At last I had been put to bed in my little hammock, and a being fair as a seraph had bent over me, saying prayers, and Ave Marias.

I had been dreaming, I believe, pleasant, sunny dreams, when

suddenly a quick grasp woke me. It was the same fair woman, but now her face was blanched deadly pale. The white women, whose work it is to bury the dead drowned at sea, could not have looked more ghastly. She said nothing, but, gathering me up in her arms, she rushed on deck.

I see it yet distinctly — that fearful scene! The good ship was plunging like a frightened steed, — madly plunging, rushing on toward a low lee-shore upon our left.

There, over rocks whose white tops shone up clear and ghastly in the fitful moonlight, the great waves boiled and surged, and then retreated, coming up again to hug those frightful, desolate rocks more madly than before.

The winds howled and shrieked, like so many demons keeping holiday; and onward toward this terrible shore our ship was plunging. The moon over head shone out sometimes from thick, black clouds, like a phantom face, looking down mockingly upon this war of elements. Anon, the vivid lightnings flashed, and the thunder sounded its hoarse, muffled dirge-notes; and in the midst of it all, our vessel, like a prancing steed, was careering joyously, bounding onward toward death.

There was no boat which could stand, for a moment, the fury of such a gale. Some of the men launched one, it is true; but it had scarcely cleared the ship when it went to pieces before our eyes, and the poor fellows perished.

No, there was no hope, none; the boldest swimmers were powerless in such a sea, and the grasp of those fiercely-battling waves was no mother's cherishing love-clasp. I know that fair woman strained me closely to her breast, as she clung with her other arm to a rope overhanging the sides of the vessel. I know,

with my ear close to her lips, I could catch, amid the storm, solemn words of prayer; then there was a mighty shock,— a sound, as when many a cannon peals forth its echo-startling clang of defiance; and after that I know no more. ✕

I seem to have a faint, and yet most terrible vision, of the moon shining down, brighter than ever, on white, ghastly faces upturned to her gaze, their long locks dripping with the briny waves; of the sea subsiding to a dead calm, as if contented with its prey; but, beyond that fierce, terrible crash, I know nothing.

My next memory is very different. It is of a fisherman's hut on the Cornwall shore; a little, smoky, disagreeable place, where one morning I lifted my head from a couch of sea-weed, and looked around me. I saw low, smoke-blackened walls, hung with fishers' nets, seal-skins and dried herring. A man sat by the drift-wood fire; he had a strange face, in which my riper judgment can hardly tell whether the good or evil predominated. It wore an expression of hardy, patient endurance. About the mouth were the strong lines of physical power, and the thick, shaggy hair shaded a brow whose solidity and breadth betokened anything but a simpleton.

I fancy I must have loved power and strength even then, for I know my childish spirit seemed to recognize far more affinity with him than with his wife, who was by far the kindest-looking person of the two.

But, whatever I thought of them, I am sure I must have had memories of far different scenes; for I well remember that I resented, as an indignity, my having been brought to that humble dwelling.

I was very weak, for I had no sooner completed my survey of the desolate-looking apartment than I was forced to lay my head back upon my sea-weed pillow; and it must have been half an hour before I was able to speak. By this time, the woman had completed the preparation of breakfast, and approached me with a porringer of warm goat's milk, and coarse bread. But I put it haughtily from me, and, rising up in my bed, I exclaimed,

“I don't want any of your breakfast; and I wish you'd just tell me what I've been brought to this horrid place for?”

“I reckon 't was as kind a thing,” growled the man at the fire, “to bring you home here, as to ha' left you out o' doors to die along with that dead woman I found you fastened to, two weeks agone this mornin'.”

“Dead!” said I; “mamma is n't dead, is she?”

“Wal, I reckon you won't find any on 'em anythin' else but dead, that was out on the lee-shore that night. They're all gone, barrin' you; and we might as well ha' left you to die, if you can't carry a more civil tongue in your head.”

“Well, go away, please,” said I, more gently to the woman, who still stood by the bed-side; “I can't eat any breakfast, this morning.”

“Poor little critter!” said the woman, compassionately; — “belike she's lonesome, — you ought not to told her, John;” and she turned away.

I lay there in a kind of stupor. I was not old enough to realize how strange was the providence which had preserved only me, a little, helpless child, out of all that crew of bold, strong men; not old enough for praise and thankfulness; and I

was only sensible, as I lay there, still and quiet, with closed eyes, of a deep, desperate feeling of hate and anger against I knew not what—the sea, the storm, the ship, almost against the very people who had died, and left me thus alone in the world.

CHAPTER I .

Mine was surely a strange childhood. I grew up there in the fisherman's lonely hut, on the Cornwall shore. The fisherman and his wife had no children, and they loved me, and were kind to me in their way. The woman soon found that my errant, wandering spirit could ill brook confinement; and she ceased her attempts to teach me knitting and net-making, and allowed me to wander whither I listed, only exacting that I should bring home at night a certain quantity of sea-moss, which her husband used to carry for sale to the neighboring market-town, a distance of some twenty miles.

Perhaps, to one of my temperament, this hardy life was not without its advantages; at least, it was singularly free from temptation. No Indian maiden ever led a life freer, or more tameless. I used to scale cliffs from which the boldest hunter would have shrunk back appalled, and, standing on their jagged summits, laugh a defiance to the eagles, and toss back my long, black hair, with its sea-weed coronet, a princess in my own right.

Neither the fisherman nor his wife knew how to read, and I grew up in a like ignorance; and yet, I was by no means devoid of one kind of education. I could tell where the eagles hatched and the sea-birds hung their nests; where the tallest trees lifted

their great arms, praying to the pitiless sky, and where the storm-winds lashed the waves to wildest fury.

My keen eye could discern in the distance each little cloud no bigger than a man's hand; and afar off I recognized the coming spirit of a blast that should be strong to strew the sea with wrecks.

One night—I must have been about thirteen years old—I had climbed to the very top of a high cliff, known as the Devil's Tea-kettle. It was a singular place; steep, pointed, jagged rocks hemmed in a basin, on whose sandy bed white, shining pebbles lay bleaching in the sunlight. I had heard terrible tales of this strange chasm. The peasantry said it was the brewing-place of the waters of the stream of death, for never were the waves known to rise high enough to fill the basin, but that some goodly ship went down in sight of land, with all her freight of precious souls.

I had never seen the waves boil in the Devil's Tea-kettle, but I had been told that never had they surged so madly as on that fearful night when I was dashed upon the lonely shore, and the storm-spirits clasped hands with the winds, and shouted forth my mother's requiem.

I think I must have been born in a storm, for they wore to me the familiar faces of dear old friends. I loved them; and on this night of which I speak, when I had climbed to the top-most ledge of these spectral cliffs, I planted there my firm step, and, looking forth to sea, laughed merrily. And yet a landsman would have said it bade fair to be a beautiful night. The sea was very calm—too calm—for it was the lull before the tempest. The sun was going down into his palace of clouds, fling-

ing back over the waters the lengthening robe of his glory ; and over opposite, the moon, like a fair young bride, was climbing up the east, with a star or two for bride's-maids, going forth to be wedded to the night.

O, it was a beautiful scene ! I have looked on such in later years, till my heart ached with their quiet beauty. But it ached not then. I clapped my hands as I looked forth over the waters, for there, in the far distance, was a little cloud. It was a pretty thing enough, quite in keeping with the scene ; white, and soft, and fleecy, as an angel's wing. But I recognized it ; I knew it was no seraph coming nearer ; but that, as in their funeral processions at the East, they send far on, in advance, white-robed maidens, scattering flowers, even so now had the advancing spirit of the storm, twin-leagued with darkness and despair, sent forth before his face this peaceful herald. And I knew from its position, and the rate at which it seudded before the wind, that there was to be a fearful storm,—no gentle breeze to rock a child's cradle, but a Euroclydon, to lash the deep sea into fury.

O, how high my heart swelled as I looked on it, and shouted, in my glee, that the Devil's Tea-kettle would boil well to-night ! But I think it was not from any native malignity. I desired not death, but excitement. I wanted a wreck, it is true ; but then I would have braved life and limb to save the lives of its victims. But the sunset glory faded out from the heavens, the moon climbed higher, the white cloud widened, and I sprang down the cliff, and, gathering up my basket of sea-moss, walked slowly home.

I did not sleep that night. My little room opened out of the

one where I had first found myself, and which was at once sleeping-room, kitchen and parlor, for the fisherman and his wife. About midnight, I heard a sound. It was a signal-gun, — once and again it boomed over the waters. Hurriedly dressing myself, I roused the fisherman from his slumbers, and, putting on a cloak and hood, stole unobserved from the dwelling. My feet did not pause till I had reached the topmost ledge of the Devil's Tea-kettle. Merciful Heavens! how the waves seethed and boiled! What a sight! It frightened even me, who had never known fear before; and, springing down the rocks, I fled as if a whole army of fiends were pursuing me.

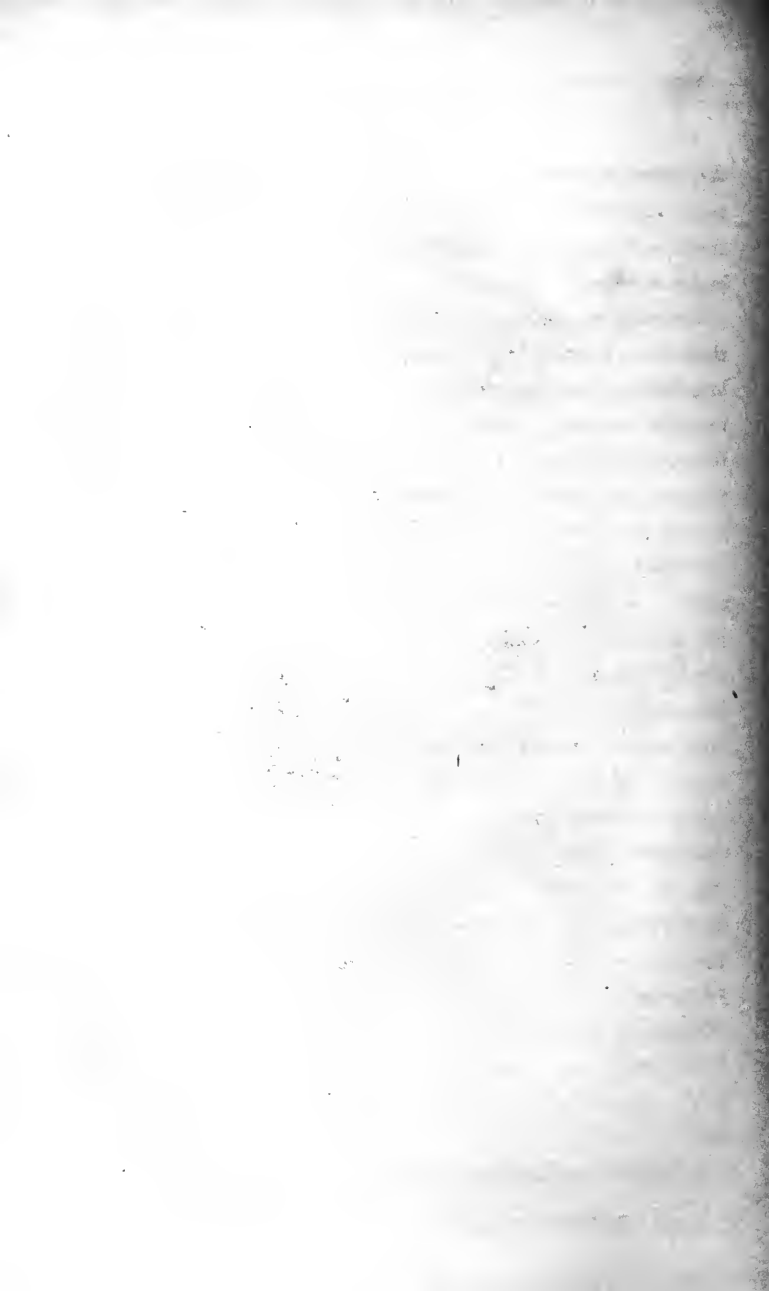
I hurried along the shore for a few rods, when the light of a lantern flashed full in my face, and I paused. It was John.

“You here, child?” he said, in a tone which had more of surprise than anger. I think he was glad to have some human eyes to gaze on the terrible scene, beside his own. The moon, which had shone out fitfully as I stood beside the Devil's Tea-kettle, was now buried beneath billows of heavy, surging clouds. Only now and then some vivid flash of lightning would show us, in the distance, a great, black-looking ship, like some fearful phantom bearing down upon the shore.

At intervals, the signal-guns would boom over the waves like the sullen roar of some wild animal; or a human voice would shriek out wildly, hopelessly, for the help which came not. O, it was a terrible sight to stand there and watch that mighty ship, hurrying helplessly to its death. I looked till my soul grew sick — I could look no longer. I sank down upon the cliff where I was standing, and clasped my hands across my eyes. I did not see the struggles of the proud ship, but I heard



THE SHIPWRECK.



the sullen, deafening crash, when she, too, struck upon hidden rocks, and went down helplessly in sight of land. I heard the crash, and, putting my fingers in my ears, ran inland, till my breath was spent.

And then the early summer morning dawned. We had stood there three hours, though it seemed not as many minutes. So long had the good ship struggled with the waves, so long her brave crew died a living death of suspense and anguish. As soon as the earliest dawn-rays commenced to light my path, I turned my footsteps homeward; and, at the door of the hut, I met John, bearing a senseless figure in his arms.

"This is all that's left of 'em, Agnes!" said he, with a sadness unusual to his tone; and, entering the cabin, he laid his half-drowned burden upon the sea-weed couch. His wife had already opened the windows, and lighted the fire; and she hastened to apply vigorously all her stock of simple restoratives. Her care was presently rewarded, by seeing the stranger's eyes unclose, and catching the faint sound of his irregular breathing.

It was several days, however, before he could rise from the couch where he had been placed. On the morning of the fourth day, he slowly approached the window, and sat down. "My friend," said he to the fisherman, "I owe you already more than gold can ever pay you! Will you do more for me still? Can you bring me, from the next post-town, a sheet of paper and some ink; and will you let me be your guest, till I receive an answer to the letter which I must write? When it comes, I shall have gold to reward your care, and strength to proceed on my journey."

Of course he gained his point, for when did Frederick Hutton

ever fail so to do? I watched his course after that for years, and I never knew him fail to accomplish whatever he undertook. The letter was written and sent, and, during the two months which glided away before its answer came, Frederick Hutton was my constant companion in all my rambles. He wanted a guide, and took me in the absence of a better; quite careless as to the effects such an association might produce upon my mind. And yet, to do him justice, he was really very good-natured; and when he found out, a week after our acquaintance began, that I could not read, he set himself to work in earnest, to supply the deficiency. I loved my teacher, and my progress was rapid.

I suppose Frederick Hutton would as soon have thought of winning the fisherman himself to love him, as me, the rough, wild-natured child of his adoption. But I have been told, by physiognomical *connoisseurs*, that half the blood in my veins is Spanish; and I, uncultivated child of thirteen as I was, loved the handsome young Englishman with a wilder devotion than many a grown woman is capable of. O, how I loved him!

He told me nothing of his personal history, but years afterwards I learned that he was very rich and noble. For a long time I was unconscious of the nature of my own love for him, until, one afternoon, when we were walking, his own words revealed it to me.

“So they call you Agnes Lee, do they?” he asked, pulling me down on a rock beside him, and leisurely drawing my long hair through his fingers. “How, in the world, came you by such a romantic name?”

“I don’t know what romantic means, sir,” I answered, simply; “but they call me Agnes Lee, because on St. Agnes’ night I was

cast upon the lee-shore in a terrible storm, and they had n't any other name for me?"

"Ho! that's it, is it? Quite a good account! You must have been born for telling stories. Well, I've a mind to amuse myself, now, telling you one. Did you ever hear about love? But of course you never did, you who never saw a handsome man in your life."

"Except you, sir," said I, looking admiringly into his bold, handsome face. His laughing blue eyes twinkled with fun, in appreciation of the honestly-given compliment; and then he proceeded to give me my first lesson of that love, stronger than life, and more powerful than death. As he described its workings, my cheek flushed crimson, for I knew that even so I loved him. At last he grew weary of me, or of his subject, and, drawing a book from his pocket (he had procured several from the next market-town, in order to teach me to read), he bade me run away for a while to play, and come again when I got tired.

Slowly I sauntered onward, with one remark which he had made sounding in my ears. He had said, "Love seeks beauty as naturally as the flowers the sunlight!"

Was I beautiful? My whole mind and soul were full of the question. At last I remembered a sunny pool of clear, fresh water, where I could see myself as in a mirror. I had often looked there, to adjust my sea-weed wreaths; but I had never noticed my face, for never, until this afternoon, had the question suggested itself, whether I was beautiful. Cautiously I crept to the brink, and, many times drawing back in fear, I at length looked in. I unbound my tresses, and they floated almost to my feet, long, heavy, and black as night. Set in them, as in a frame,

a face looked out, — a childish, sunburned face. There were eyes there like a sloe's, large, black, and melting, and anon flashing fire. I thought they might be beautiful, but I was not sure. As to the features, I was not very well competent to judge. I know now that they were regular enough for a sculptor's model; then I only knew that Frederick Hutton was handsome — my face was not like Frederick Hutton's; therefore I thought I must be homely. But I was not satisfied. I stole lingeringly back to my companion, and found him, in turn, tired of his book, and ready to amuse himself with me. "Please, sir, may I ask you a question?" I inquired, very timidly.

"Why, yes, Miss Agnes Lee, since you have never in the world done such a thing, I rather think you may."

"Well, sir, am I handsome?"

Frederick laughed long and loudly, ere he replied,

"Well, you genuine descendant of Mother Eve, you precious little specimen of feminine humanity, where you picked up your vanity, nested here on the lee-shore, like a sea-gull, I don't know; but go and stand there in the sunshine, and I'll answer you. Shake down your long, black hair, all about you, gypsy, — there, that's right, — now stand still!"

I should think I stood still there a minute and a half, waiting for him to make his decision. I really suffered while his eyes were so bent upon me. At last, his fixed, steady look was getting to be torture, and it was an inconceivable relief when he made answer,

"Well, Aggie, it took me some time to decide, didn't it? No, you are not handsome yet, Aggie. You are brown as a Malay, and there's something almost savage in your fierce, black

eyes. But your features are good enough, your hair is long and thick; and, if it were taken care of, and were n't sunburnt, it might be magnificent. As it is, you're rather homely; but, if some people had you, you might be made a very handsome woman."

Strange as it may seem, dearly as I loved him, this reply gave me pleasure, instead of pain; though I well knew, had he loved me, he never would have made it. But I don't think I wanted him to love me then. He had said I had the material for a handsome woman, and that was all I wanted to know. My heart beat quicker, with a sense of power. I said that I would make him know I was beautiful, some time; that, some other day, I would make his proud heart quicken; and with this hope for the future I was quite content.

One day, soon after, we were walking together over the rough rocks bordering the shore. I remember a sense of life swelled high and exultant in my heart; and I bounded over the steepest ledges, hardly seeming to touch them, or paused to balance myself and turn around on their sharpest points.

"Come down here, Agnes Lee," said Frederick Hutton's voice, at length; and, in an instant, I was by his side.

"I've been thinking," he remarked, carelessly binding up some strands of sea-weed, "I've been thinking that you would make a capital ballet-dancer." And then he proceeded, in answer to my eager inquiries, to explain to me the nature of theatrical performances in general, and ballet-dancing in particular.

"It's a bad life," he concluded, "and I would n't advise you to try it. But, after all, I don't know but you'd be better off there than here. You do very well here now, but what 'll be-

come of you when you get old? If you could get to be prima-donna, you could make a fortune, if you would only keep it. Let me tell you one thing, Agnes: some people think all dancing-girls are wicked; but *I* tell you it is the soul governs the profession, not the profession the soul; and you could be as good and pure on the boards of the Royal Theatre as in the Hermitage of Lough Derg."

It was but a few days after this last conversation when the answers to Frederic Hutton's letters came; and, having liberally rewarded the honest fisherman's hospitality, he bade farewell to the lee-shore of Cornwall. It was a beautiful morning in the early autumn, and I went with him a mile or two on his journey. O, how gladly the waves danced, and the sun shone! and I could see his heart was dancing too. As for me, I was not glad, nor yet very sorry; for my whole heart was filled with a strong under-lying purpose. Pausing, at length, he let go my hand.

"There, Agnes, you must go home now," he said; "good-by, my child;" and, taking a guinea from his pocket, he added, "take that, Aggie; it's the best thing I've got to give you to remember me by."

"Will you just please to make a round hole in it, and mark an F. on it somewhere?" I pleadingly inquired.

"Well, here's one with a hole in it; that will do—— and there," and, sitting down, he marked "F. H." in bold, distinct characters. "There, little one, good-by, now," and, drawing me to him he kissed me. It was the first time he had ever done so—the first kiss man had ever left upon my lips; and it lingered there for weeks, and its memory had power to thrill me for many a year.

CHAPTER III.

Six months after this, I woke up, one spring morning, and found myself in London. I do not know how I got there; that is, even to this day, I can hardly understand the perseverance with which I, an unprotected child, walked the whole distance, seeking food and lodging of whoever had charity enough to shelter me. Providence must have guided me, and I think so, more than ever, when I recall a singular incident which befell me on my arrival.

It was afternoon when I entered the great whirlpool of London. Half-frightened by the crowded streets, I had somehow made my way to the Park, and, for almost the first time in my life, I sat there crying. At last I was roused from my sorrowful abstraction by a gentle touch and a kind voice; and, looking up, I met the glance of a middle-aged gentleman, clad in a quiet citizen's suit of black. There needed but one look at his kindly face to assure me I could trust him; and his question, "What is your name, my child, and why are you here alone?" was immediately followed by my relating to him my whole history, save only that portion which was connected with my love for Frederic Hutton.

"So you've come all alone to this far-off London, to learn to be a ballet-dancer?" he said, kindly. "I must say it is a very strange undertaking. The chances that you will succeed are hardly one in ten thousand. However, you could not have fallen upon a better friend. I am a theatre-manager myself, and I'll try you; and, if I find you can do anything, I

will take you to a friend of mine in Paris, where I am going on business, and you shall be educated for the stage."

Thus it was, reader, that my first night in London was passed in a respectable lodging-house; and I woke up in the morning from peaceful dreams under the mighty shadow of St. Paul's. My protector proceeded, soon after I arose, to put me through a trial-course of calisthenics; and I suppose the result was satisfactory, for a dress-maker was sent for, and requested to prepare me for a journey to France, and a residence at *l'école de theatre*.

Two years had passed; I was now fifteen. They had been two of the happiest of my life. True, at first confinement had been irksome. I had missed the wild, wailing, solitary sea, and the free range of rocky shore. But my cherished purpose was every day drawing nearer its accomplishment. My kind protector had visited me several times, when business called him to France; and it would have done your heart good to see his kind, satisfied smile, when he received a favorable report of my progress.

It had been discovered, in the course of my instructions, that I had a voice of unequalled power and pathos, and that I should be able to succeed as a cantatrice with even less trouble than as a danseuse; but I had marked out my own course. I could not consecrate every gift to the insatiable spirit of the stage. I must retain some power not thus prostituted, to make beautiful my private life. However, I cultivated my voice most assiduously, and was, in a short time, pronounced the best singer in *l'école*.

There were, in the same institution, a large number of young girls, more or less gifted, preparing for the stage; but among them all, I had but one friend,—Inez Vaughan. She has, since then, under another name, made the world's heart throb strangely. She flashed, comet-like, upon the age, the very impersonation of the genius of tragedy. The great world held its breath to listen; but, comet-like, she was struck down suddenly, and the Provence roses bloom upon her grave.

I could easily discern that there were no others whose acquaintance would not rather retard the accomplishment of my great end; but Inez and I became friends, in that word's truest sense. We studied and read together, and she would sit beside me, her dark eyes flashing like lighted coals, while I told her strange, wild tales of the rocky shore, and the surging, restless sea.

But, as I was saying, I was fifteen. My two years' study had been completed, and the night was appointed on which I was to make my *début* at the Royal Theatre. I had grown very beautiful; no one who had known me as the romping child of the fisherman's hut would have recognized me now. My hair was long, and heavy, and luxuriant as ever; but now it was satin-smooth, and from its wavy folds seemed to flash sparks of light. My complexion, by proper care, had cleared up wonderfully; now it was like the sunny side of a ripe peach, only deepening in the cheeks to a richer crimson than peaches ever wore. The eyes were the same, — large, black, and strangely lustrous, — and the wan, thin figure of the child had rounded in the girl to a symmetry as perfect as it was stately. Yes, I was very beautiful.

I arrayed myself for the occasion in a crimson satin, heavily

wrought with pearls. Around my neck and arms were chains of pearls and rubies, fantastically twisted together, fastened with gold clasps, in which a single diamond flashed like a burning star. Strings of the same jewels flashed among the heavy bands of my braided hair, and I almost started back in wonder as I glanced at my full-length reflection in the green-room mirror, it seemed so like some old picture, with its strangely vivid lights and shades.

That night my triumph was complete. The whole house rang with applause, and many of the bouquets thrown at my feet were knotted with jewels. I welcomed this success, for it was one stepping-stone the more toward my great end. O, how I wished *he* had been there to see it! But never once had my eyes rested on him since we parted in the sunshine on the desolate Cornwall shore.

All that season I continued to draw crowded houses, and on my last night the theatre was filled to overflowing. I had never looked better. My costume was one just calculated to set off my dark, oriental beauty, and it was in full glow. Half an hour had passed, when a new arrival, in one of the front boxes, seemed to create a sensation. I glanced that way, and my eyes met the most perfect vision of feminine loveliness on which they had ever rested.

Her style of beauty was totally different from mine; and I looked on her, at first, with an artist's admiration, unmingled with envy or jealousy. She wore a garnet-colored velvet cloak, lined with ermine; but, as she entered the box, it fell from her neck, revealing shoulders white as Caucasian snow-banks, and moulded as purely as a Grecian statue. Her hair was of a bright gold tint,

and the heavy ringlets were gathered at the neck in a net-work of pearls, from which one or two stray tresses had escaped, and floated down over her neck and bosom. Her robe was of azure satin, frosted with pearls; and her fan was gorgeous with the plumage of tropical birds. Her eyes were a deep, tranquil blue, large, and strangely bright; and her fair complexion, pure and clear as marble, was deepened in the cheeks with a just-perceptible tint of rose.

My eye had taken in all this at one glance. She seemed to me like the actual presence of one of those beautiful pictures before which I had stood with filling eyes in the gallery of the Louvre, and from my heart I blessed her for her loveliness, as I turned to gaze upon her companion.

Saint Agnes! patron saint of mine! why was it that in that instant a deep and bitter hatred for that beautiful being crept into my heart? Her companion was Frederick Hutton! It was his hand that so carefully adjusted the folds of her cloak, his eye that watched so eagerly her every look.

I danced that night as I had never danced before. Deafening roars of applause fairly shook the building to its centre: but, of all that gorgeous crowd, I saw but one. It was a full half-hour before he seemed even to notice me, and then he carelessly turned his opera-glass toward the stage.

I danced *to* him, *at* him — what you will; at least, I danced for his eyes only. And I had the satisfaction of seeing him perfectly absorbed, entranced, and apparently quite forgetful of the presence of his companion. That was my last opera in the season, and a few months afterwards I was in London, pleasantly established in fashionable apartments at the West End.

"Agnes," said my guardian (for so I had learned to call my fatherly protector), entering my room, one morning, "there are yet six weeks before your first engagement here commences. What do you say to a masquerade, in the mean time? I have plenty of relatives among the West-End fashionables, and I should find no difficulty in having you introduced as Miss Agnes Lee, in circles where no one would ever dream of Viola the ballet-dancer being admitted. Will you go?"

While he spoke, an intense longing took possession of my heart to gaze face to face on that great world of which I had heard so much. True, I had seen people enough. I had danced to crowded audiences, — but of fashionable society I was as ignorant as a child. But I presume very little of my enthusiasm appeared in my manner, as I lifted my eyes, and said, quietly,

"Yes, guardian, I will go."

"Well, I thought so; it's so like girls to want to see the world! So I've made arrangements accordingly, and I've two invitations for you, from two very fashionable ladies, who are under some obligations to me. Here is one from Mrs. Somerby, to her estate, 'The Grange,' a little out of town. You'd meet there a half-score of ladies, beside Simmons, and Falconbrace, and a dozen other young men who would fall in love with you. You'd have to look out for your own heart, because their cards would be played out as soon as they knew your true position."

"Well, sir, where is the other one?"

"That? O, that's further out of town — to the Heronry, the estate of Mrs. Somerville Sikes, and you would n't find anybody there to fall in love with. There'll be one man of mark there, though, — Fred Hutton; but Lady Clara Emerson will be there,

also, and they've been reported engaged so many times, I think there must be something in it."

Frederick Hutton! O, how the very mention of his name thrilled me! Could it be? Was I indeed to see him,—to be in the same house with him once more? My heart fluttered like a caged bird, but my nerves were strong, and my self-command perfect; so I answered, carelessly,

"Well, sir, I believe I'll choose the Heronry; you know there's no knowing what might become of my heart at the other place."

My guardian laughed, and, patting my cheek pleasantly, went out to hunt me up a dressing-maid, and provide me with a suitable wardrobe.

The next day, at three in the afternoon, I was whirled up the spacious carriage-drive of the Heronry, and introduced to the stately Mrs. Somerville Sikes. She was a lady of, I should think, about forty, extremely well preserved, and very elegantly dressed. There was an air of patrician ease and gracefulness about her, such as I had never before observed in any lady with whom I had been thrown in contact.

She welcomed me cordially, and went up stairs with me to my own room; then, kissing me, she remarked, "I will send your maid to you, my dear; you will have just time to dress for dinner." O, what would I not have given to have dared to inquire if Frederick Hutton had arrived! But I could not trust myself to mention his name, and I threw myself in an easy-chair, and sent my thoughts backward with memory, while my maid unbound the long tresses of my hair.

When, at last, its arrangement was completed, I arrayed my-

self, with trembling fingers, in a richly-wrought India muslin. Nothing could have exceeded the simplicity of my attire. The white dress was without ornament, and I wore not a single jewel, with only a sprig of cape-jasmine in the dark folds of my hair. I turned to the mirror, as I was drawing on my gloves, and saw that, though I had many times been more dazingly brilliant, I had never looked more beautiful; and yet my step faltered as I entered the drawing-room.

Mrs. Sikes advanced to meet me, and I was formally presented to the company; but my eye took in but two faces, my ear caught but two names. Clara Emerson was there, with her face so strangely fair in its quiet beauty, and her slender figure robed in azure silk. A wreath of white buds nestled in her golden curls, and she looked even more lovely than when I had first seen her. Beside her sat Frederick Hutton. His was truly the handsomest face my eyes ever rested on. He was, indeed, as my guardian had said, a man of mark; with his Apollo Belvidere figure, his hyacinthine locks, and his laughing dark-blue eyes. The Lady Clara looked up, smiled, and spoke very sweetly; but Frederick seemed so intent on his conversation with her, that he merely noticed me by a bow. A moment after, however, as Mrs. Sikes repeated my name, "Miss Agnes Lee," he paused in his conversation, and I knew, by his puzzled face, he was remembering that he had heard that name before; but he could not recall the time, and I felt relieved. But, even if he had, he would hardly have associated the fisher-girl of the Cornwall lee-shore with the very different looking young lady presented to him in Mrs. Sikes' drawing-room.

He sat opposite to me at dinner, but his attention was wholly

engrossed by his companion. Once, indeed, he casually glanced at me, and then I heard him remarking to Lady Clara that "Miss Lee was magnificently handsome;" and then he added, "but her style is so different from yours, *ma belle* Clara," in a tone which left the listener little room for conjecture as to which style he preferred.

During the evening I had been making painful efforts to be agreeable to some dowager countesses, until I was tired; when, much to my delight, my task was interrupted by a call for music, and the Lady Clara Emerson was led to the piano. Her performance was mediocre, perhaps a trifle better than that of boarding-school misses in general. She affected opera airs, for the most part, and, though Frederick Hutton leaned over her, and turned her music, I could see he was neither interested nor animated; and yet I knew that music was his passion. At last Lady Clara arose from the instrument.

"Perhaps Miss Lee will favor us," suggested Mrs. Sikes; and Frederick Hutton came to my side, to lead me to the instrument. His hand just touched mine as I took my seat, and, strong as my nerves were, it thrilled me strangely. I sang an old Scotch ballad of hopeless love, — a song that required power and pathos, — and I sang it well.

I dared not glance at Frederick, but I could hear his quickened breathing, I could almost seem to feel his attitude of rapt attention; and I knew he recognized my power. For a week after that he scarcely spoke to me. His attention was still absorbed by the beautiful Clara; and yet, sometimes, when he was sitting by her side, I would raise my eyes from my embroidery, and meet a glance from the distant corner where they were

sitting, that would cause my cheek to crimson beneath my drooping lashes. When I sang, Frederick never came near me; but I knew he listened, and that, let him struggle as he would, one day my purpose would meet its accomplishment.

CHAPTER IV.

The human will is strong, stronger than life, and even death will not triumph over it utterly! I wonder whether man or woman ever yet devoted themselves, with all their energies, to the accomplishment of a favorite purpose, without succeeding. At least, success is the rule, and failure the exception.

Time passed on, and Frederick Hutton gradually changed in his deportment. His attentions to the beautiful Clara became a shade or two less engrossing, and very often he would lead me to the piano, and hang over me during my performance, with his whole soul looking out of his dark eyes. The Lady Clara must have noticed it, and I think she loved him; but her disposition was a singular one. She was too proudly indolent to struggle for the possession of anything. She dressed as becomingly, talked as prettily, and smiled as sweetly, as ever. When Frederick Hutton sat down beside her, she welcomed him with a look that had not the slightest shade of reproach in it; and when he was away, she seemed totally unconscious of his desertion. No battery of attractions could have been half so effective as this calm, indifferent dignity. I could not have had a more powerful adversary to contend with. Sometimes Frederick would watch her for a long time, and then turn away, with just the queerest

kind of smile about his lips, and talk to me more assiduously than ever.

One night, I was walking in the shrubbery. It was the rich, lustrous prime of the summer; the sun had gone down in his glory, and the twilight hours had gathered up the gorgeous clouds, like drapery of kings. It was evening; the moon, like a fair queen, sat on her silver throne, among her parliament of stars. I had gone out alone, and, with a hurried step, was walking to and fro beneath the larches, keeping time to painful thoughts. At last my step grew slower, and my mood changed. I went down with memory, searching for hidden treasures along the paths of the past; and tears came to my eyes, as I remembered the free, happy, gypsy-like life I had led, before Frederick Hutton came to Cornwall.

"Better, O, how far better off was I then than now!" said my throbbing heart, beating painfully against my velvet robe. "Alas! for I am weary," said my lips aloud; and, at that moment, a voice, whose faintest tone could have almost called me from life to death, said, very gently,

"Agnes — Miss Lee — am I intruding?"

I turned, and welcomed him, with the tears still heavy on my lashes, and the shadow heavier on my heart.

"You are sad, Agnes," he said, sorrowfully, taking my hand in his, as soothingly as one would pet a weary infant. "Agnes, dear, beautiful Agnes, I love you! I never said those words before, Agnes, to any woman, not even to Clara Emerson; though long ago the great world voted us engaged. You will understand them, — you will believe them. I did not mean to love you, Agnes, — I closed my eyes against your beauty,

—I tried to shut my heart against the melody of your voice ; but you have triumphed. See, I am at your feet! Won't you, can't you love me, my Agnes ?”

But I did not speak ; I could not. The hope of a lifetime had met its fulfilment when I heard him say those words, and I could not answer him.

“ O, Agnes, Agnes !” he cried, beseechingly, “ only answer me ! only say, ‘ Frederick, I love you ! ’ ”

And, clearing my voice, and drawing my figure to its fullest height, I stood there in the moonlight, under the larches, and answered him,

“ Frederick Hutton, I love you with my whole soul, as I have loved you for years. I am yours, and I will be yours, and no other man's, till I die ! ”

In his excitement he did not notice that I had said “ for years ; ” and, standing by my side, he clasped me to his heart, whispering, “ My Agnes, — my wife ! ”

For one moment, sick and faint with joy, I suffered my head to lie upon his breast ; and then I withdrew from his arms, and said, firmly, “ No, Frederick Hutton, not your wife ; and, if you knew me, you would sooner die than call me so. You know not who or what I am ! ”

“ And care not, Agnes, so that you will let me call you mine. Nay, Agnes, do not think so meanly of me. I care not for wealth or rank ; — I know that I love you, and that is all I ask to know.”

I am very strong-willed, naturally, but I could not summon strength or courage to dash, with my own hands, that blessed

night, the cup of joy from my lips; and I answered him, resolutely,

“To-night, Frederick, I will tell you nothing. Meet me here at sunrise, to-morrow morning, and I will tell you what you little dream. I am going in, now.”

Once more I passively suffered him to fold me to his heart; for the second time in his life his lips touched mine, and then, gliding from his arms, I reëntered the Heronry. That evening I was happy. I resolutely closed my eyes against the shadows that hung around the morrow, and opened my heart to the joy-touches of the present. He never left my side, and, when I sang, he watched me with his dark eyes beaming through tears.

The next morning arose, fair and calm. I dressed myself quickly, and hastened to the trysting-place. Frederick was there before me. What a joyousness there was in his greeting! Surely I must wait yet longer, ere I could summon courage to freeze the smile on his lips. Once more I yielded my hand to his clasp, and wandered along with him underneath the larches. The sun was just rising. The tree-tops glowed like golden arrows, pointed with diamonds; the long grass, knotted together, shone like a fairy tracery of brilliants, and over all the sunshine lay, broad and fair,—the very smile of the gods. Its glad beams rested like a blessing on Frederick Hutton's hair, and the whole world seemed to be dressed in holiday robes, as if for a rejoicing. And yet, amid all that beauty, and glory, and happiness, I walked on by his side, a crushed, downcast, miserable woman, with a confession trembling on my lips which would blot out from my own life all the sunlight, and send one forth, dearer than my life, out into the world, a heart-broken,

hopelessly wretched man. I could not look at him, — I could scarcely breathe. At last, I could walk no further. I leaned against one of the larches; I stood there, and lifted up my pallid, woful face, in the light of heaven's free sunshine. Frederick turned and looked at me, with a vague and nameless terror in his gaze, and then he faltered, "Agnes, my Agnes, what is it?"

"Listen, Frederick Hutton, and I will tell you," I answered, and my voice was strangely calm. "You remember the fisherman's hut, on the Cornwall lee-shore, and the wild, rude child whom you taught to read? And you remember this!" and I drew from my bosom, where I had always worn it, the guinea he had given me when we parted. He took it in his hand, and looked at it.

"Yes, I remember, Agnes; but what of that? Go on, — how came you by this?"

"You gave it to me, sir; for I am that lowly child. Would you call me wife, *now*?"

Brave, noble heart! I could see the struggle ere he answered; but his love triumphed.

"Yes, Agnes, I would call you wife, even now. It was your misfortune to have been cast upon the lee-shore; so it was mine. Shall I shut you out of my heart because you stayed there a longer time, my Agnes?"

O, I had hoped he would have spared me that last trial; but no, I must drain the bitter potion to the dregs, and so I did.

"No, Frederick Hutton! Not your Agnes! I will never be your wife! You saw me upon the stage at Paris; for, listen, Frederick, — I am Viola, the dancing-girl!"

“O, God! O, God!” moaned that strong man, weeping like a child. “Spare me, for this is bitter!”

I knew then, as I had known before, that he was lost to me forever. I had willed that he should love me, and he did love me. Perhaps I might have been his wife, had I willed that also; but I would not. Even had he wished it, out of the might of his great love, still would I have refused; for I loved him too well, too unselfishly, ever to couple his proud name with disgrace. At last, he drew me within his arms once more.

“Agnes,” he said, “my own, my beautiful!—God knows I would have gone down gladly to my death, rather than live and know that fate had put this stern and terrible barrier between us. O, may Heaven bless thee, Agnes, and save thee from grief like mine!” and down, over my face, fell, like rain, the bitter, scalding tears of that proud man’s sorrow.

That day, I left the Heronry. The purpose to which I had vowed my life was accomplished, and even in the hour of its accomplishment its curse came with it. Better far that I had died, than brought such sorrow to him, so noble, so dear. And yet I danced that winter better than ever. The smile that curled my lips was as bright; the bloom died not out from my cheeks, nor the light from my eyes. Still the world’s homage fell upon my ear, and even the noble and the gifted knelt at the feet of the beautiful dancing-girl. Very often the Lady Clara Emerson was among the spectators; but I never knew whether she recognized in Viola the Miss Lee she had met at the Heronry. I thought her cheek was a little paler than of old; and somehow the old hatred toward her crept out of my heart, and into its place stole a gentle sympathy. I heard of Frederick Hutton

upon the continent, and, amid all my heart-poverty and wretchedness, my life had one crowning glory — I knew he loved me!

CHAPTER V.

It was toward the close of the second winter after I had parted with him at the Heronry. I was no longer a ballet-dancer. With the departure of him I loved, came a full conviction that hereafter I had no private life to make rich, — that I must give all to the world. I had commenced to sing, and I was now *prima donna* of her Majesty's theatre.

It was almost the last night of the season. I had gone to the green-room with a heavy weight upon my heart; but I shook it off, and perhaps sang even better than usual. At last the audience dispersed, and, going down by the private entrance, I stepped into my carriage; but, seeing the outline of a man's form upon the seat, I was about to spring back, and summon my servants to my assistance, when a voice I had heard in the dreams of many a night whispered, "Agnes!" I called "Home!" to my coachman, and sat down. As the carriage turned, the gas-light flashed full in my companion's face. I could scarcely restrain a shriek of surprise. Frederick Hutton had changed so, one would hardly recognize him.

"You are surprised, Agnes," he said, gently, "at the work trouble has done. Never mind, — I shall only be at rest the sooner. I don't know what made me come to seek you, Agnes, this night, of all others. I am to be married to-morrow. I came home, and found that Clara had suffered terribly. She did not know that I

had ever loved another ; but my long-continued attentions to her had won her heart, and, upon my desertion, the whole joy and hope of her life seemed to pass away. I was too wretched myself to wish to be the instrument of like misery to another. My heart smote me when I looked upon her pale face, and I resolved to make what reparation I could, by giving her my hand and what of life remained."

He paused, but I felt that my voice was full of tears ; I said nothing, and he continued, " Agnes, I know your strength of love ; but your frame is strong, too ; perhaps you will suffer more than I, but you will live longer. I want you to promise me something, will you ? I will send for you when I am dying, and I want you to come. Will you come, Agnes, wherever you are ? Will you promise me to come ? " And, putting my hand in his, I answered " I will come ! " and it was to both our souls as if an oath had been spoken.

I saw Frederick Hutton once more. Three years had passed, and I was rich. I had left the stage, and was residing on my own estate, a lovely villa in the south of France. I was scarcely more than twenty, and still beautiful, though trouble had wrought many a thread of silver in my hair. I think my taste must have been tropical ; for you might have fancied my *boudoir* the abode of a Sultana. A fountain of perfumed waters danced and sparkled in its marble basin, in the centre. A glass door opened into a small but choice conservatory, where grew the Indian aloe, with its broad green leaves ; and gay tropical birds plumed their wings on the whispering boughs of

the Eastern palm. Tiny, graceful little streams flowed among thick, mossy grass; and beneath the Indian trees, half hidden in the foliage, stood groups of marble statuary, that you might have dreamed were Fauns and Hamadryads, the guardian spirits of the scene. Around the walls of my favorite room I had hung a few pictures, small, but choice; they were mostly woodland landscapes, with here and there one of Claude Lorraine's Italian sunsets, or a head by Perugino. On the floor were rich, heavy mattings, from the far-famed looms of the Indies; and lounges and cushions of Genoa velvet, in crimson and purple, were scattered, with lavish prodigality, around. On one of these I lay reading, and listlessly winding around my fingers my unbound hair, when my favorite waiting-maid, entering the apartment, handed me a letter. I recognized the hand-writing, and my fingers trembled as I broke the seal. It was long, and closely-written; but I will copy it all here. It ran thus:

“AGNES, MY SOUL'S OWN AGNES:—

“Many months have passed since last we met. Summers and winters have been braided into years, and still on my heart is your name written; not one hieroglyph that you traced there has been obliterated. Heart and soul I am, what I always have been, yours! I married Clara the day succeeding our last meeting, and I love her very much. Can you reconcile this with what I have just written? I am yours, as I said; you, even you, my Agnes, are more to me than all the rest of earth; but it is much to feel we can make another human being entirely happy.

“I told you Clara was sorrow-struck and drooping. Well, after our marriage, she brightened up in my presence, as a wood-

flower, beaten down by the wind and rain, but yet not crushed, revives in the calm glow of the sunshine. Soon she regained her health, and I believe she grew dear to me as a sister. My own health was failing even then, and for many weeks I was prostrated by a low, nervous fever. During all that time, she was so devoted in her attentions, so patient in her tireless vigils, you would have thought her some angel sent from heaven to guard me. And yet, Agnes, through it all, grateful as my heart was to her, it never beat with a single throb that was not faithful to you. I loved you, — you only, you always.

“ For a time after my fever, I seemed to be recovering; but the cold weather brought increasing debility, and I was ordered to Italy. Of course, Clara was my companion. I don't know why it was, but even these genial skies could do little for a malady which was not of the flesh; and yet, more and more I grew in love with Italy. I used to sit and dream for hours on the banks of the silvery Arno, trying to people the fair land with its old-time deities; but, somehow, every sylph used to wear your face. I wonder if it was sin thus to worship you? I could not help it, and I believe God has forgiven me. And this brings me to something I must tell you; it took place last summer. I had been very ill, and was just able to go out of doors. I sat alone (for I had sent Clara away from me), feeling miserable and despondent. I thought of you, and, O! Agnes, I cannot tell you how my soul longed and pined for you. I knew it would be sin to see you then, but I remembered your promise to come to me at my dying hour; and wickedly I knelt down before God, and my heart uttered a wail, a cry, an earnest prayer for death! I longed for it, Agnes; for I felt that thus only

could I gaze again on my heart's treasure; and yet, when I had uttered the words, I was frightened at their terrible meaning, and I grew still, and held my breath. I am not superstitious, Agnes; I am a Protestant, and do not believe in miracles, or visions; but I know I heard a voice then, and it was no human voice; it said, 'Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest!' There was a struggle in my soul, and then once again I prayed, and this time the words of my prayer were, 'Thy will be done!' And then unto my soul there came a holy peace and calm.

"Since then I have longed for you, Agnes, as I sat under the orange-trees; but it has not been that I might fold you in the arms of earthly love — O no! for I knew I was a dying man; — but that I might take your hand in mine, and point you to that other land, where never more will the white day wrap her robe about her, and go mournfully down the sunset slopes, trembling to her death. You must meet me there, Agnes, where there is no need of the sun by day, or the moon by night. —

"Agnes, it is weeks since I wrote the above. I was at Genoa then; you will see, by the post-mark, I am at Florence now. I have a mission for you, my Agnes; come quickly, and you will find me here. I was taken very ill at Genoa; but I travelled here by easy stages, and now I am writing, propped up by pillows, to summon you to my dying bed. Do not start, Agnes, or sigh, or weep! I am a happy man. I am going home, where there will be no more sickness nor sorrow, — home to a friend whom I know, a Redeemer whom I trust. You must meet me there, Agnes; I shall wait for you, and you must come. But you will see me here first, you will come to me immediately; for you

have vowed to stand by my dying bed. My soul will wait for you, — I shall not die till you are here! Come, then, quickly, for I am in haste to be gone!

“I said I had a mission for you. I give Clara to your care. She was an orphan when I married her, and she has no one left to care for her. She is a good, gentle little thing, but not a strong woman, like you. You can guide her, you can care for her; for I know you have left the stage. You will promise to stay with her as long as she shall need your care. She knows but little of our past; nothing, save that you are dear to me, and I have sent for you. God in heaven bless you! Agnes, not of my claiming, but of my loving, come quickly!

“FREDERICK HUTTON.”

Two days more, and I stepped from my travelling-carriage at the door of a beautiful Italian villa. In the faint glimpse I had as I hurried up the steps, it seemed like an earthly Paradise. An English housekeeper met me at the door.

“You have been expected, ma’am,” she remarked; “my master is just alive!”

And there, in that pleasantly-furnished room in the Italian villa, I saw Frederick Hutton once more, and for the last time. He was handsomer than ever, but his face wore the beauty of an angel. His large eyes were unearthly in their brightness, and on his forehead sat a radiance as of heavenly glory.

His whole face kindled as he saw me, and a smile of welcome played around his lips. He stretched forth his hand:

“You are in time, Agnes,” he said; “I knew you would be;

I was waiting for you. Will you care for her?" and, with his thin finger, he pointed to Clara, who was kneeling, in a stupor of grief, at the bed's foot.

"Yes, Frederick," I answered, with faltering voice and filling eyes, "as long as she has need of me!"

"God bless you, darling!" he whispered, tenderly; and then he closed his eyes, as if in prayer. "Agnes," he said once more, "you will find in that little desk what I have meant for you. You must look for it when I am gone, and use it often. You will come, Agnes, I know it. 'He giveth his beloved sleep.' Think of that, and be comforted when I am lying low. Sit down now, Agnes, and take my hand in yours, and sing some old hymn. Good-by, darling!"

I took his hand in mine, and sat beside him. I steadied my nerves and my voice, choking back the tears; and I sang that grand old hymn, "Saviour, when in dust to thee." Before I had finished, the hand I held in mine grew cold, the dark eyes closed. Frederick Hutton was dead!

We buried him there in sunny Italy; you would know his grave, if you should go to Florence. We placed a white stone at his head, and on that stone was graven, "He giveth his beloved sleep!"

The gift he had left for me was the pocket Bible which had been his constant companion. At first I prized it for his sake; then it became far dearer to me for its own, for it has guided my footsteps in the path which will one day take me home to heaven and him.

I watched over Clara, for his sake, until the throbbings of her great grief grew still; and then, still young and beautiful, she

went forth to gladden another heart, another home ; and, standing now with her husband and her children, I know not whether her lips murmur at night-fall the name of the dead.

I am old now, but my life is calm and happy. I am looking forward to that day, not very far off, when I shall stand by Frederick's side in heaven, and, putting my hand in his, whisper, "Here am I, my beloved ; I have been thine only, through all !"

MY WIFE.

AN IMPROMPTU.

WHERE the maples nodded together,
At the edge of the pathless wood,
With a basket of ripe red berries,
A sweet little maiden stood.

Her hair was like shadows of sunset,
Falling soft over meadows asleep,
Or the earliest break of the morning
Pouring gold upon hill-side and steep.

The green leaves lay light on her forehead,
As if wood-nymphs were crowning their queen;
And the tremulous smile of the sunshine
Slept warm on the tresses between;
The blue-bells were nodding beside her,
But her bright eyes were bluer to see,
As they turned, with an innocent gladness,
That fair summer morning, on me!

Her cheeks wore the hue of ripe peaches
The sunlight so often hath kissed,
And her figure was light as the fairies
That ride on the morning's blue mist!
But her voice was like nothing, save Eden,
And the musical breezes which blow
Over meadows that sleep in the sunshine,
Where never falls tempest or snow!

And she said, with her blue eyes uplifted,
And a blush on her berry-brown cheek,
“ Will you show me the way, sir, to Ashley ? ”
And her voice was so gentle and meek,
That I caught to my heart the maiden,
And sued her to be my wife ;
So I showed her the way to Ashley,
And she shows me the way through life.

GRACIE'S SNOWDROPS.

It was a little bunch of snowdrops which a child laid on my window. They were very beautiful, with their soft, delicate green, and their petals white and pure, and fleecy as the great flakes of snow the children used to catch in their fingers, standing in Grandfather's porch, on a Thanksgiving morning. They reminded me of those old days, when I, too, held the snow-flakes in my fingers, and watched to see them melt. Weary years had passed since then, wherein my feet were wandering far away from the old homestead, and the thanksgiving on my lips was sobbed upward through tears. I had seen many other things melt beside snow-flakes, and sometimes an avalanche had fallen upon my brightest hopes; but not for these things I wept, holding between my fingers the snowdrops which little Grace had laid upon my window. My gaze was turned inward, and I seemed to see another Grace, and other flowers, heavy with the tears of a yet wilder sorrow.

Our little Grace — "Little Blossom," as Grandmother loves to call her — is strangely fair. Her loveliness is of the most ethereal type out of heaven. You, with your poetical fancy, would compare it to white clouds of a summer evening, or the transient gleam of an angel's wing, in those spring days when the sky seems lovingly bending nearer, and the very glory of heaven is scarcely hidden by the blue between. Her rare loveliness does

not consist alone in the pearly whiteness of her skin, and the delicate tracery of her blue veins, or the clear azure of her eye, and the pale gold of her hair. Beyond all this, there is beauty of a higher order, which lends to her every word and act an indescribable charm. It shines in her smile, it rings in her gleeful laugh, and makes graceful every movement of her flexile figure. But we gaze on her oftenest through tears; for even so looked and moved and brightened before our eyes our other Grace, her mother before her. Grace Vinton had been the pet and darling of the whole village. She was beautiful, and an heiress; and yet the rarest of her charms was her entire forgetfulness of self. O, how we all loved her! how we blessed the fate that constituted her my father's ward!

She made our whole lives radiant with a new charm, even in the days of her early childhood. The breath of the flowers was sweeter when her hand gathered them; the bird-songs swelled up with a clearer melody when her sweet voice joined their chorus; and our very prayers grew eloquent with a deeper faith, at her low, silvery "Amen!" And then, when she grew up to womanhood, every day getting fairer and sweeter, fuller of music and poetry, and all things good and glorious, what wonder we looked on her with almost superstitious awe, and whispered to each other that God had sent his angel to dwell among us? The house grew strangely dark and dull when she left us to spend a few months in the great city. Brother Frank declared himself a victim to "dog-days" long after the autumn wind had swept the last sere leaf from the drooping willow. We heard of her very often;—how noble and gifted ones had knelt before her in homage; how her angel nature seemed to

cast a spell of love and purity even over the sickly haunts of fashion; and brother Frank listened with a frown on his brow, and declared the dog-days had lasted, this year, into January.

But she came back to us, after a time, looking lovelier and more radiant than ever, — all our own Grace still! And then, in the simple country church, Grace became in very truth my sister, my brother Frank's wife. Surely never was there a fairer bride. There were no pearls or diamonds in her hair, no costly Point D'Alençon lace floating over her white neck and graceful arms; but I don't think the veriest fashion-monger in the world would have thought they could improve Gracie. She looked so fair, so ethereal, in her simple white muslin, with her rich tresses looped up with a wreath of snowdrops! Never did a young husband's eyes turn on his loved one with more of idolizing tenderness, and never was there a warmer welcome than that with which our parents held her to their hearts, and called her their child, their life's best blessing.

A year had passed, and the room where Grace lay sleeping was dark and very still. She opened her eyes, at length, with a shudder, and cried out, "Nellie, O Nellie! did you say it? Must I die? Must I leave the husband who has made my life so happy, the baby that has only one short week been pilloved on my bosom, and go, no one knows or can tell where? Must I, Nellie?"

My answer was a burst of tears, and then once more Gracie murmured, "O, must I? Why did n't any one tell me, before, that I had got to die? Why was I taught everything but this? O, Nellie, Nellie! it is very bitter!" And then she turned her face toward the wall, and went down alone into that dark valley,

strait and narrow, where no two can walk together. Spasms of mental agony passed over her pure face; memories of unrepented sins came up like ghosts before her, who, we thought, had committed no sin; and in that hour spirit-hands held to her lips a cup filled to the brim with those waters of Marah which men call Repentance, that bitter portion which every mortal one day must drink. But the struggle passed over, and up to her eyes there drifted a peace which comes to those only whose feet tread the borders of the land of promise.

We placed snowdrops in her coffin, and loving, almost breaking hearts moistened them with tears; and one heart, whereon her head had rested, throbbed with a sorrow too wild for utterance, too mighty for tears!

We named her baby Grace, and she lives and brightens before our eyes, as like to the Grace of our earliest love as the lily nodding fresh and fragrant on the stalk to the last year's blossom mouldering beneath. But, ah! the eyes that gaze on her are oft-times dim with tears, as my heart goes sorrowfully backward through the spectre-haunted fields of memory, whither Gracie's snow-drops have carried me this morning.

BEHOLD, I MISS THEE, LOVE.

I miss thine arms, beloved !
Thy breast whereon my head was wont to lie,
While the pale moon clomb up into the sky,
And winds like vagrants roved.
I miss thy calm, deep eyes,
That, smiling all their Peace into my soul,
Taught my wild yearnings where to find their goal,
And made earth Paradise !

I miss thine earnest praise !
Dost thou remember, resting on thy heart,
How some low gush of trembling song would start
Some dream of other days ;
And I the silence broke,
Whilst thou, my heaven, with thy calmest eyes,
Bent o'er me, as in summer bend the skies,
Blessing the words I spoke ?

Or how for hours I sat,
And whispered legends, told alone to thee,
Of fairy land, so far beyond the sea,
And tricky pomps thereat ?
Till life a glory seemed,
And we, like mortals whom some god had blest,
Immortal grew, and tranced in golden rest,
As Grecian poets dreamed.

Be satisfied ! To thee
My soul no veil has worn. It has been thine,
And thou hast lingered o'er each burning line,
Till naught was mystery ;
And in each writing traced
By fate, or passion-spell upon my heart,
So long thy name has borne a blessed part,
It cannot be erased.

Be satisfied ! The form
Though other claim, or call the lips his own,
He cannot win to them the burning tone
Thy love made warm !
I may not be thy bride,
But, O, by all the past, whose glory hath been thine,
By all the paths thy soul hath trod with mine,
Those souls shall be affied !

THE SECRET MARRIAGE.

It was a magnificent apartment in an old English baronial hall. A strong light fell from the lofty window over a gentleman and a lady, the only occupants of the room.

The girl was very young, — scarcely had her feet wandered beyond the enchanted boundary of girlhood; and yet there was a kind of tropical ripeness in her gorgeous beauty.

Her figure was tall, stately and fully developed, — exquisite in its proportions; her features were purely classical in their outline, and from the small and graceful head fell, nearly to her waist, the shining ringlets of her jet-black hair. But the chief glory of that matchless face was the large black eyes, with their long fringes, in one instant so dusky and full of shadows, and the next so melting, so suffused with grief or tenderness, so full of dreams.

She was, indeed, a glorious creature, and her loveliness was unconsciously displayed to the best advantage by her simple deep-mourning dress. Her corsage was fitted smooth and close over her bosom, and finished at the throat by a simple collar of plain white muslin. She wore no ornament, save a heavy golden cross, fastened around her neck by a black cord, and hanging midway on her bosom. Her sleeves were tight at the shoulder, while at the wrist their folds fell heavily about the small, dimpled hand.

Scarcely could a painter's fancy have imagined a fairer being than was Margaret Hereford, as she sat there, in the high-backed, crimson velvet chair, with the full light falling over her head. She was an orphan, and alone on earth.

Not a drop of her kindred blood flowed in the veins of any human being. Her father had died scarcely six months before, and left her desolate; and she, the delicately-nurtured child of affluence, had gone forth to win her bread by the toil of a governess among strangers.

Hers was one of those strong natures, very powerful either for good or evil. So far, by the care of her gentle mother in early infancy, and in later years of a father, the rule of whose life had been, "Thou, God, seest me!" her faith and her life had been kept pure, and the great strength of her soul had been turned heavenward.

The gentleman kneeling beside her was almost equally handsome, in another style of beauty. He was tall, slight, and very graceful, with large blue eyes, laughing and bright. Upon his brow lay heavy curls of rich brown hair, brushed lightly back. His mouth was beautiful, but there was about it a lurking expression which a physiognomist would have interpreted as an evidence of a certain kind of voluptuous self-worship, and he would have been right. Percy Ruthven had, indeed, shrined himself as the idol in the temple of his heart, and all other things were second to this handsome, haughty self; yes, all, even the beautiful Margaret Hereford, whose avowed lover he had for some time been, and whom he did indeed love beyond all things mortal, except himself.

Percy Ruthven was the only son of a baronet recently

deceased; with a slender fortune, and strong hopes, based upon the good will of a wealthy, childless old uncle, who (the gossips said) was at the point of death.

A frequent visitor at Clifton Hall, he had often met the beautiful governess, before he even knew her name. At first he used to look with a wonder that was half compassion on the pale girl, in her deep mourning robes, who was sent for, evenings, to play waltzes and quadrilles for the young people to dance. She would come into the drawing-room so shy, so still; her sad, irresistibly fascinating face, and her deep mourning robes, were such a contrast to the glare and glitter around her; then, when her task was performed, she would steal so quietly from the room, noticing no one, speaking to no one, yet moving as if she were the superior, with her regal step and her scornful eye.

From noticing her coming with surprise, he grew to watch for it, to be silent and dissatisfied when she did not appear, and at last to use his privilege as an intimate friend of the family, and steal away sometimes to the nursery, under the pretence of a visit to her ward, the little Angelique.

The first time he went he found Miss Hereford (he had learned her name from the servants) sitting by the window, in the moonlight, with the little Angelique in her arms. A lamp was burning on the side-table in another portion of the apartment; but the child, with her golden curls, was sitting in the full glory of the moonlight, and about her were folded the arms of her governess, scarcely less a child than herself.

The little one was very beautiful. Well had she been called Angelique, for her fair face reminded you of nothing but an

infant angel. You might have thought some fairy had changed her on a midsummer night.

There could hardly have been imagined a fairer picture. The governess was the shadow, with her deep-mourning dress, her long ringlets of black hair, and her dark and splendid beauty; and the fair, golden-haired child, with her clear, English complexion, and her large, spiritual blue eyes, was the brilliant light.

For a moment Percy Ruthven stood, and, unseen, gazed upon the two, in silent admiration.

"Ah, Angelique, lily-bud!" whispered the governess, "thank God you were given me, — the one green spot in my summerless life."

The little one lay there quietly, winding those long black curls around her white, dimpled fingers; then she asked, earnestly,

"Do the angels have such curls? Do the angels look like you, Maggie? 'Cause, if they do, I shall love to go to heaven. Say, Maggie, do you think they look like you?"

"No, darling, I don't suppose angels have black hair and dark eyes, like mine. You look much more like an angel, my pet; you know they call you Angelique."

"Angels, both of you," exclaimed a deep voice close beside them. "I, for one, can bear witness, Miss Hereford, that I have seen one with black hair. Nay, Angie, pet child, I came to see you; can't you introduce me to your friend? I see she is looking scorn on me for speaking to her without an introduction."

"O, yes," said the sweet child, simply. "Maggie, this is Percy Ruthven. I like him better than any one in the world,

except you; and he loves me, and pretty soon he'll love you too."

"Ha, ha! Bravo, Angelique,—a shrewd prophecy!" laughed Percy Ruthven; "but, Miss Hereford, since I have come and so well recommended, too, you will surely let me stay?"

Miss Hereford laughingly gave her consent, and, thanks to the young gentleman's lively conversation, she passed a far pleasanter evening than ever before since she entered her new abode. This was succeeded by many other pleasant evenings; for Percy Ruthven was not, as yet, sufficiently rich or distinguished to have his absence from the drawing-room particularly remarked.

For some time previous to the afternoon on which our story opens, he had been the affianced lover of the beautiful governess. Had you known them both, you would have wondered how Margaret Hereford, with her pride, her strength of purpose, and her lofty soul, could have loved one so far her inferior in all that constitutes true greatness.

But he was handsome, fascinating, generous; and Margaret, looking through this glass of love, saw not that his good impulses were nothing more than impulses, that his principles were wanting in strength and steadiness, and even his learning was superficial. She only felt that he, in worldly station so far above her, had yet given to the poor governess the rich treasure of his love, to be the one star of her life.

Many times, when he was absent, rising up from her bed in the solemn night, with her face upturned to the stars, she prayed God to bless him, and crown him with glory and honor.

There was a longing in her heart to pour out its worship and

reverence. Percy loved her, and her imagination invested him with the perfections of an archangel.

Hers was a passion, a worship, stronger than life; ay, so strong that the waves of the sea of death could not choke it. And yet, so perfect was the womanly dignity, the innate royalty, of the proud spirit, that she never forgot her own position.

Not for her was the outward worship of clasped hands and bended knees; in her heart she bowed before him, but outwardly her betrothed had no power to quicken a single footstep, to cause the neglect of a single duty.

Therefore it was that she sat proud and composed, this pleasant summer afternoon, in that high-backed arm-chair, in the drawing-room of Clifton Hall.

Her lover, as we have said, knelt beside her, and his eyes were upturned to her face.

“But, Margaret, my own Margaret,” he was pleading, “is not a marriage before only the priest and the witnesses just as sacred as if all the world beheld it?”

“Listen, Maggie,—you are mine; you have given yourself to me, to be cherished and protected. Your engagement closes here to-morrow, and you shall not, my Maggie, commence another. I will not have you endure this slavery any longer. You must be my wife to-night.

“Now, Maggie, you shall decide. Shall it be openly, before all the Cliftons, in the drawing-room of Clifton Hall, with many an eye to gaze upon my fair bride’s loveliness, though she has said she cared nothing for other eyes than mine? Shall it be here, Maggie, and then shall I go forth, disinherited by my uncle, self-doomed to poverty forever? or, will you meet me out-

side the house, at half an hour before midnight, and go with me to the chapel, where you shall become my wife before Heaven, with the pastor's blessing, and to-morrow, when you leave Clifton Hall, go to the station, a few miles distant, where your husband will meet you, and bear you to a sunny southern home, beyond the blue sea, trusting to a future day, when the world shall call you by my name ?

“ If you had friends, Maggie, whom such a course might pain, I would not ask it ; but you are all alone, and you have said my love was all you sought.

“ But, darling, I do not dictate ; choose as you will. If I desire riches, it is for your sake more than mine ; but, if you choose to give them up, if you choose the public marriage, be it so ; for I would give life itself, rather than you should ever suffer,” and the speaker paused, and pressed her hand to his throbbing heart.

For a moment the lady hesitated ; then, veiling her lustrous eyes with her silky lashes, she said, timidly,

“ We will have the secret marriage, Percy. I care not for riches for myself, but I cannot cause you pain. It is true I have no friends but you, and while my heart is right I will neither court nor fear the world. It hurts my pride, this concealment, for it is foreign to my nature ; but I love you so fondly, Percy, that, for your sake, I will strive to forget it. Yes, I will meet you to-night, outside the hall, at half an hour before midnight. God grant, beloved, that neither of us may ever have cause to regret it ! ”

“ We shall not. God in heaven bless you, my own dearest,

for you have made me very happy!" and, rising, the young man drew her to his heart.

"O, my Margaret," he said, softly, "can the love of a lifetime ever reward you for all this great goodness to one so unworthy? May God be merciful unto me only in proportion as I make you happy!"

As he spoke thus, for the first time in her life, the young girl passed her arm around her lover's neck, and pressed his hand to her lips. "I am happy now, my beloved!" she whispered. "It is I who must reward you, by my untiring devotion, for the riches of your great love, the wealth of my life."

"I must leave you now, darling," said the young man, gayly; "leave you to prepare for that other, happier hour, which shall see you my bride, as well as my idol!" and, with a kiss, he departed.

"O, take away your snowdrops pale, — I cannot bear the sight!
They were woven in our darling's hair upon her bridal night;
And fairer seemed the snowy buds than India's rarest pearls,
And fairer than them both the brow that beamed beneath her
curls;
That lily brow, those tresses dark, — O, ne'er so fair a bride
Hath trembled at the altar place, her chosen one beside;
And never heart more fond and pure a wedding gift was brought,
Than Ada's, in its sinlessness, its sweet and earnest thought."

At half-past eleven, Margaret rose from her knees, and, folding about her a heavy crimson shawl, she left her room. Hurriedly she stole into the adjoining chamber, and, bending over a tiny crib, pressed her lips to the brow of the little Angelique,

and murmured a blessing over her. The crushed tears were heavy on Margaret's drooping lashes ; but she faltered not in her purpose, and, in a moment more, she was clasped to Percy Ruthven's heart.

“ God bless you, dearest ! ” he exclaimed ; “ I knew you would not fail me ; ” and then, pulling her shawl more closely around her, he hurried her toward the chapel.

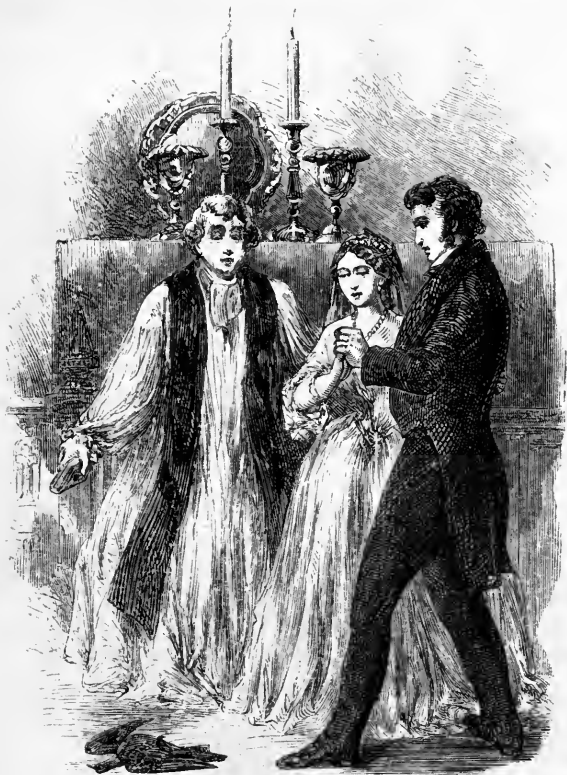
As they passed in, and Margaret stood there in the full glare of the wax tapers, Percy started back in astonishment, for never had he seen a human being one half so beautiful.

She stood there, her strange eyes lit as if with the fires of inspiration, her black curls put back from her forehead with a band of snowdrops, her robe of thin, embroidered muslin floating around her like folds cut out of a snow-cloud, and the crimson shawl streaming backward from her polished shoulders.

Her cheek burned with a deep, steady crimson, the glow of her unwonted excitement ; and her bosom rose and fell beneath the folds of her muslin robe.

It was dark as night at the further extremity of the chapel ; only a brilliant light streamed over the priest in his white robes, and the bride and bridegroom kneeling before the altar ; and, just as the nuptial benediction was pronounced, twelve chimes rung out, loud and clear, from the chapel bell. They rose from their knees as the last one struck, and stood there in the solemn midnight, wedded !

At that moment, just as Percy Ruthven was about to clasp his fair bride to his heart, a bird which had flown in, apparently,



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THE SECRET MARRIAGE.



through a broken window-pane, fluttered feebly a moment above the lights, and then fell down lifeless at the bride's feet.

"It is a young raven," said Percy, as he raised it, — "apparently half starved," — and he threw it down again, carelessly.

"O, Percy, dearest, I am sick with terror! The omen, the omen!" and the bride shuddered, and clung tremblingly to the arm of her new-made husband.

"What, you frightened! you, my strong, brave Margaret!" and Percy passed his arm about her waist. "Why, it is nothing, darling; there is no omen. I suppose the poor bird got in here by mistake, some time ago; and, as the chapel is seldom used, he could not find his way out, and he has starved to death.

"Do not tremble, my Margaret, on this golden morn of our existence! My life, my blessing, look at me once with a wife-like smile, or tell me, my wife, do you regret that you are mine?"

"Regret it, Percy, my soul's idol, never! I am so glad, so happy! I was only foolish, that is all;" and, trembling with joy now, as she had before done with fear, she nestled trustingly in his arms, and they left the chapel.

At the door of Clifton Hall they parted; and thus ended that strange marriage, in the midnight and the solemn silence.

A few days later saw the newly-wedded lovers domesticated in a delightful villa, in the south of France.

"Another night; O, if her brow out-paled the wreath before,
Sure, nothing earthly could have matched the white her cheek then
wore!

So pallid that the tracery of the blue, delicate vein
Upon the temple passed away, and all its violet stain, —
Gone was all light and radiance ; with moveless lip and limb,
She listened to the dreadful words they whispered her of him ;
The husband of her bride-hood false ! her frightened soul seemed
 flown,
And the pale snowdrops wreathed a brow above a heart of stone ! ”

Seven years had passed, of mingled light and shade, — seven years !

The first three had flown rapidly in that sunny villa in the south of France.

Percy had been devotion itself to his fair young wife, and she in return worshipped him. All her pride seemed swallowed up in adoration. His will was her law, and his smiles her joy and hope. Only one trouble had visited them, and that was when the roses of Provence had bloomed on their little Percy's grave, ere he had been three months strayed away from Eden.

But, at the end of the third year, they were recalled to England by the sudden death of Percy's uncle, and the acquisition of the fortune the young husband had anticipated. But they were so happy in each other, that Margaret had joyfully yielded to the suggestion that their marriage should not yet be made public, as such a course would inevitably bring upon them a round of visiting and fashionable annoyances.

But life in England had hardly been so deeply blessed to Margaret as was life in France. True, Percy was as tender, as reverent, as affectionate, as ever. True, she worshipped him with the same soul-engrossing affection ; but he now spent

a great part of his time away from home, alleging that his increase of fortune rendered his personal supervision of his estates absolutely necessary, and also that he was obliged to mingle in society to some extent, in order to avoid suspicion concerning his family ties, and secure to them undisturbed those blessed hours of peace and love together, which were their deepest joy.

Margaret also knew that her husband had embarked a large portion of his fortune in speculations, of whose nature and extent she was not informed. And yet, of late, she had been very happy.

Another babe slept in her arms. The angel visitant was a girl, this time, with her father's large blue eyes and sunny curls; and for this was Aymee all the dearer.

Percy, too, seemed to share all her enthusiastic fondness for the child. He used to come home worn and weary, and then, sitting at his wife's feet, with the little one in his arms, declare that God had blessed him on earth with all the blessedness of heaven, and that one could afford to be patient under slight annoyances, so that one could turn again always to the peace and repose of such a home.

And Margaret's proud spirit had grown meek and calm. Her resistless energy and love of excitement were hushed to sleep, and she dreamed not of a future fairer than the present, as she watched for her husband's footsteps, or hung over the crib of her babe.

I said seven years had passed; yes, and this was the very anniversary of their marriage.

Their home was a beautiful one in the suburbs of London, — a pleasant little English cottage, with a perfect Eden of beauty sur-

rounding it. There were fountains which tinkled musically on the drowsy air, little miniature ponds, and clumps of rare and beautiful trees.

Inside, the house was adorned with all that taste could devise and art could furnish; rare mosaics, exquisite paintings, and little gems of sculpture; jewelled vases, and ornaments of China and porcelain, or grotesquely carved out of silver.

But, in all those gorgeous, tasteful rooms, there was nothing half so fair as the young mother and her sleeping babe. The wife was robed in a dress of snowy muslin, delicately embroidered; for she remembered that seven years ago, that very night, had her bridal vow been spoken, and she had robed herself as if for a second bridal. Once more a wreath of the drooping snowdrops was knotted in her curls, and once more her snowy shoulders and exquisitely-moulded throat rose like sculptured marble above the soft and fleece-like robe.

She was, if possible, even more beautiful than ever. A happiness more perfect than oftentimes falls to the lot of mortals had brought smiles of joy to her eyes, and a bright flush to her delicately-rounded cheek. She sat there now at a western window, with the glory of the sunset falling at once over her and the cherub little one sleeping so quietly upon her breast.

At this very hour, in another part of the city, another scene was passing before the eyes of the angels. In a large and stately garden, lying adjacent to a palace, rising on one side - as if out of the bosom of the waves that surrounded it, on the

other fronting broad lands; and pleasant paths straying among fountains, walked a lady almost as fair as the sweet wife Margaret.

The Lady Alice Sinclair's loveliness was of a very different style. Her figure was small and slight as a fairy-child, or a snow-figure; her features were delicate; her large eyes reminded you of the blue sky and the calm home of the angels, while over her fair shoulders floated sunny curls, like tangled masses of fine-spun golden threads. Her dress was of a sky-blue silk, falling about her in graceful folds; and she wore no ornaments save a cross of diamonds attached to a necklace of pearls. The little graceful fairy could not have smiled beneath the sunshine of more than sixteen summers, and all that time the paths where her tiny feet must walk had been angel-guarded and strewn with flowers.

By her side walked a man, to whose perfection of form, and mien, and features, at least thirty years had brought the lustre of their maturity. He was tall, finely formed, and strikingly handsome, and his voice was musical as the harmonies of a skilfully-played instrument.

"Alice, sweet, angel Alice!" he whispered, tenderly, "in three days you will be my bride, all my own. What a joy, Alice, to make your life a very dream of sunshine! Will you be happy, my beautiful one?"

"Yes, dearest, I could not be otherwise than happy with you by my side; but, tell me, Percy, how came you, so much older and wiser than I am, to love a silly little thing like me?"

"Rather let me ask, beloved, how could you, so young, so

beautiful, and highly-born, have learned to love me, so much older, with my temper soured, and my brow wrinkled by the cares of years, and poor, too, as you knew I was, Alice? Tell me, darling."

O, what a beaming face was turned up to his in reply, albeit the tears did tremble on the long lashes; and how musical the sweet voice, which whispered,

"Your love gives me life, my adored, my noble one! Ask why the flowers love the sun which shines on them, the rain which waters them, why the infant loves the mother who cherished it in her bosom, and then know that you are my life's sun and music, that my heart's hopes sprang into being at your touch, and behold why I love you!"

The proud man bent over her, and caught her to his bosom, as he said, solemnly,

"May God in heaven visit me with his anger, if aught but death part thee and me, O, my beloved!"

An hour later, and the same proud man was entering the fairy-like cottage of Margaret; for the impetuous wooer of the Lady Alice Sinclair was Percy Ruthven, the wedded husband of Margaret Hereford. The young wife — for even yet Margaret was scarcely twenty-five — heard the welcome sound of his approaching footsteps, and, hastily laying her babe in its little crib, she darted forward to meet him.

Percy had been charmed, touched, by the beauty and innocence of the Lady Alice Sinclair; he had been flattered by her

love, but never, for one moment, had his heart been untrue to Margaret. His love, such love as he was capable of giving, was all hers. His soul was penetrated by her beauty, for he had never seen another face so fair, and it was a style vastly more to his taste than that of the Lady Alice Sinclair.

He met her with a fond embrace, and, taking her in his arms, he sat down with her at the window. He brushed back the long, black curls, and gazed into the upturned, passionate eyes.

“O, Margaret!” he cried out, as if, in spite of his will, his soul gave the voice utterance, “my hope, my joy, my life, my Margaret!”

“Husband,” she said, softly.

“What says my beloved?”

“Did you know, dearest husband, to-day is the seventh anniversary of our marriage?”

“Well, my Margaret, have you ever repented it?”

“Repented it! O, my husband! ask the captive if he repents being restored to freedom, the blind man if he repents because he can once more see the glorious sunshine of heaven; but ask me not, if I repent leaving the cold, rough sea of life, on which my rudderless bark went ploughing, for the safe harbor of your home and heart! God knows, dearest, it seems as if I never could thank him enough for these beautiful leaves of my destiny.”

Percy Ruthven trembled, and the cold sweat started from his brow. He had come there, with a purpose strong in his soul, of making a disclosure which would shiver that innocent, trusting heart with agony; but he must hold her there a while longer,

—villain as he was, and deserving of her hatred, God knew he could not put her from him then!

And there he held her, while the moon rose up, and one by one the stars trembled forth, and looked down into his guilty, miserable heart, like the great, bright eyes of the angels.

Many times he raised her long curls to his lips, or pressed them passionately to his bosom. Many times he clasped her to his heart, as a lost soul would cling to its hope of heaven; and all the time those large, passionate eyes were not turned away from his face, and not once did the angel-eyes of the stars pause from looking into his wretched, guilty heart.

At last Margaret said, in a low, earnest voice, "Blessed be God that, though this quiet, beautiful human life may not last always, after it there is hope of a better life in heaven!"

"Would it cost you much pain to part with me, Margaret?" asked the husband. "Would n't you be glad enough to get rid of such a graceless scamp?"

"Part with *you*, Percy? — get rid of *you*? O, you are jesting! — thank God that I am your wife, and only death can part us! But don't jest so again, my husband; the very thought of it kills me."

"Nay, Margaret, dearest, listen to me quietly;" and he put her gently from him, and then sat down beside her, with his arm around her waist.

"Margaret, you are pure, pure as heaven; for you thought yourself my wife, though you never have been. I don't know what fiend led me to substitute a gay young friend in the priest's stead; a mock marriage instead of a real one; but I never meant

to part with you, — I never meant you should know you were not my wife ; — you were dear as life, then, my Margaret ; you are still dearer now ; but I have sinned, and we must suffer.

“ You know, dearest, how happy we were in France. Alas for it ! that might have lasted always, but for this accursed fortune, which led me in the first place to wish our marriage concealed, which tempted me to wrong your true heart, by the false nuptials. Well, this fortune came to us, and we returned to England. Since then, I have plunged madly into speculations, and they have all been cursed ; — they have failed, ruined me. I will not live disgraced, Margaret. You know me, and I say I *will* not !

“ There were but two alternatives, — death and marriage. I thought of the subject a weary while. I imagined your agony when they should tell you that Percy Ruthven, your husband, had died by his own hand ; and I felt that such a death would separate me from you forever. It was for your sake, Margaret, I chose marriage. I have wooed the Lady Alice Sinclair. She is young and fair, but not so beautiful as you, Margaret. She loves me ; for her love I care not, but her gold will help me to go into the world a free man, to surround you, my Margaret, with luxury. You shall live here still, dearest ; and every day will I come to you, and care for you, and cherish you, as if you were indeed the lady of Ruthven.

“ You have heard me, calmly, my Margaret, — am I forgiven ? ”

Margaret started to her feet as he concluded, and, tossing her arms wildly in the air, she cried,

“ O God O God ! dost thou suffer me to be deserted — I,

who have sat by his side and slept on his bosom for seven long years? Yes, for seven long years, Percy, have I forsaken all and followed you. O, be merciful! be merciful!"

And then, seeing the tears stealing down his cheeks, she threw herself once more into his arms, and cried, "Don't weep, darling, if it must be. See, I am strong,—I don't weep. I have forgiven you, long ago. Kiss me once, dearest, and then go. And listen, Percy, my best Percy,—don't come here again till after you are married!"

Then, without a sob or a moan, she pressed her lips long, fondly, clingingly to his, and then motioned him to leave her. He turned to depart, but, standing in the door and looking back upon her, he cried out, earnestly,

"God in heaven bless you and be good to you, Margaret, even as you have been good to me, all these many years!"

A solitary figure flitted through the wilderness of London,—through the retired streets of the West-End, through the heart of the city, onward, and onward, and ever towards London Bridge.

Men turned to gaze on her as she fled by them in her white robes, with the swiftness of a spirit. Some caught a glimpse of her large, dark, fathomless eyes; some, of the heavy tresses of black hair streaming on the wind behind her; and others, still, of the delicate hands clasping the folds of a crimson shawl which floated backward from her shoulders; and each one, as he gazed, asked himself what could she be doing there alone in those crowded streets,—so young, and so startlingly beautiful.

But on, on she pressed, until she reached the bridge, and gazed down on the waters. Silent, black, sullen, they lay there, chafing against the heavy stone-work far below, and over them gazed the wanderer, with a wild, eager glance.

“Why should I live?” she murmured. “Who shall say I may not lay my head on this wave’s dark breast and sleep? He is gone; and why should I live for my child’s sake, if I am the guilty thing he calls me? Let me see; I was happy once, a long time ago, was n’t I? Well, it’s past now. I am weary!” and the poor creature clasped her hands across her burning brow, still looking down, steadily, calmly, into the black, sullen waters. Who shall say what visions of past happiness were floating through her mind?—what confessions of sin, what prayers for mercy, what unutterable longings for death and peace?

But the loud voices in the steeple of St. Paul’s were calling the hour of midnight, and with the last chime Margaret Hereford sank beneath the waves!

Seven years ago that very day, hour and moment, had she arisen from the altar, married to Percy Ruthven; and now she sank, the bride of Death, in her white robes and snowdrop wreath, into the arms of the cold, black sea!

“ One more unfortunate
 Gone to her death,
 Rashly importunate,
 Yielded up breath!
 Take her up tenderly,
 Lift her with care;
 Fashioned so slenderly,
 Young, and so fair.”

Percy had left her feeling that she had borne the stroke better than he expected, and was looking forward to many an hour of happiness by her side, when the waning of the honeymoon would permit him once again to visit her.

The sun shone gayly on the morning of his bridal. They were wedded at a suburban chapel, and the bridal cortège drove gayly through the streets of London. The sides of the carriage were put up, to admit the clear, fresh air; and you could hear the glad voice of the bride ring out cheerfully.

As they approached London Bridge, the vehicle was stopped by a crowd, unusual even in that portion of the city, and Percy leaned from the window to inquire the cause.

"Please, your honor," answered a man standing by, "it's the body of a drowned woman they have just brought on shore; and all the folks must needs look at her, she is so handsome and princess-like."

Ruthven sprang from the carriage with an eager glance of curiosity, and an undefined blending of fear. One glance, and then on the air rung out a wild, piercing shriek, "Margaret!—O, my God!—dead! dead!"

Ere a year had passed, the quiet daisies grew over Alice Ruthven's fresh-dug grave; but still, at the window of a London mad-house, sits a wild, dark man, ever looking toward the sea, and shrieking out,

"O, Margaret! Margaret!—dead! dead!"

THE TWO GRAVES.

THERE are two graves far, far apart,
And the deep sea rolls between ;
O'er one they 've piled the marble high,
O'er one the grass grows green.

In the one within a gorgeous fane,
Lies she whom I called my bride,
Before whose feet I knelt of old,
In her father's halls of pride.

In the one behind the village church,
Where wild-flowers nod in prayer,
Is resting the shade of the purest dream
That brightened my life of care !

The one had waves of raven hair,
Bound round with diamond light,
Like the circlet of the evening stars
Upon the brow of night !

The other had curls like threads of gold,
And a smile as faint and mild
As those which the olden artists paint,
In their dreams of the young Christ-child !

One brought me a castle gray and old,
And jewels, and gold, and lands,
With serfs to bow at my lightest word,
And go at my first commands.

The other brought but the earnest love
That glowed in her starlit eyes,
And blest my heart like the downward rays
From the distant Paradise!

I wedded the one with stately pomp,
In a grand cathedral aisle,
And bells were ringing, in high church-towers,
A sounding chime, the while.

I wedded the other as quakers wed,
In the forest still and deep,
When hushed were the sounds of noisy life,
And the flowers had gone to sleep.

O, blithe was my night-haired love, I ween,
With the light in her bright black eye ;
But dearer far was my cottage girl,
In her angel purity.

The demons wandering over earth
For the one spun out a shroud,
And they laid her low, where wax-lights glow,
In the old cathedral proud.

The other, when holy stars shone down,
Was hearing the angels sing,
And a truant seraph folded her
In the clasp of his viewless wing!

They told me the one was lying dead,
And a tear came to mine eye ;
But joy-dreams chased the gloom away,
And a smile went flitting by.

They told me the other had gone to sleep,
And I sought the battle's strife ;
For I hated the light of the rosy day,
And I cursed the light of life !

The one lies still in her far-off tomb,
Where the tall wax-tapers gleam,
And their slant rays shine on the marble shrine
With a fixed and ruddy beam.

But over the other the night-stars swing,
When the light of day has fled,
And the wild winds sigh her gentle name,
Till I wish that I were dead !

MALE COQUETTES.

“WELL, disappointment’s the lot of all mankind!” said some venerable sage. He should have added an expression of condolence to the weaker half of community, for surely they are still more subject to the evils of chance and change.

You can hardly read a poem by one of these fair angels that does not complain of some direful calamity. Indeed, to our certain knowledge, one lovelorn damsel has been bewailing in the newspapers the loss of her husband, and some three or four faithless suitors, within the past few weeks!

Now, don’t put up both hands, and murmur, puritanically, “O, Frailty, thy name is woman!” for every one knows that lovers are not so plenty we can afford to throw them away. Every instance of this kind only affords another example of the fickleness of man! And this brings us to a subject we have long desired to see properly discussed. We mean flirting and coquetry among the “lords of creation.” There is already such an outcry made about coquettes and faithless lady-loves, that one needs to stop one’s ears, to shut out the din; but no one seems to consider that flirting is twice as common, and certainly three times as dangerous, on the other side.

Perhaps one reason may be, that woman, the world over, is too proudly noble to complain of these things. She locks whatever grief there may be in her own heart, and the cold world can only guess it by the proud step, and the haughty glance, which

seem to say the treachery of one has made the whole earth seem a kind of mirage—a pageant as false as it is glittering. For ourself, we cannot speak from experience, as we are very little yet, and never had a beau! But we can see a thousand instances of unprincipled coquetry on the part of those who decry it the most.

It is very easy to clasp trembling fingers, until the heart sends back an answering thrill; very easy to gaze in bright eyes, till the fair cheek grows crimson with blushes; very easy to soften the voice in its whispers to one ear, or to linger tremblingly over one sweet name!

You can do all these things, very innocently, of course; and, if they should awaken a heart-thrill that shall not be stilled in time,—no, not in eternity,—you can shrug your shoulders, and, throwing your cheroot to the ground, ejaculate, “Pity, pity! she’s a fine girl; but I don’t love her—never told her I did in my life; and yet I’m sorry for her,—I am, ’pon honor!”

Most magnanimous young man! One could almost consign you to the tender mercies of a second Mrs. Caudle! No, worse than that,—for it has been proved, to a demonstration, that a poor wife is better than none,—one could wish that you might suffer all the miseries of an old bachelor!—the direst lot that can befall humanity.

There are friends for the old maid—the universal aunt! Children love her, and kittens come and lie in the fire-shine at her feet, and purr! There are pleasant homes where her presence is welcome, and, by and by, some poor soul she has comforted will put a flower on her grave. But, for the old bachelor,—Heaven help him,—for man cares not for him!

A L I N E .

CHAPTER I.

There, she sees a damsel bright,
Dressed in a silken robe of white,
That shadowy in the moonlight shone ;
The neck that made that white robe wan,
Her stately neck and arms were bare ;
Her blue-veined feet unsandalled were,
And wildly glittered here and there
The gems entangled in her hair.
I guess 't was frightful there to see
A lady so richly clad as she —
Beautiful exceedingly !

CHRISTABEL.

It was a fair scene, the one where we would transport our reader, in the old days when New York was the queen city of our young republic, with scarcely a rival to dispute her sovereignty. We have a fairy spell, be it understood, by which we pass “bar, and bolt, and porter’s lodge,” and now we stand in the boudoir of the Lady Aline Wentworth.

Judge Wentworth was a thoroughly-bred gentleman of the old school, very rich, and it had been his pride and pleasure to surround his motherless girl with every charm of the most unbounded luxury.

The room where she was sitting was exclusively her own ; and it was a perfect bower of beauty. On a snowy velvet carpet shone bunches of dark, purple grapes, with their green leaves, as

if fresh gathered. Beside them were thrown wreaths of bright crimson roses, and blue-bells, looking as if piled up on snow. Bunches of rare exotics were exquisitely arranged in antique vases of agate and porphyry, and, here and there, of heavily chased silver ; and the room was filled with a fragrance as subtle as that of the gardens of Gul.

There were massive mirrors, in heavy golden frames ; and on the wall hung the glorious paintings of many an old master. There were pure-browed Madonnas, with their prayerful eyes, and sweet pictures of the Saints, with glory-halos resting on their tresses. Then there were bunches of flowers and pleasant landscape-scenes, that made your very soul grow homesick for green fields and blue sky.

But not a fairer object was there, in that luxurious collection of the rich and beautiful, than the Lady Aline Wentworth herself.

You would hardly have dared to call her beautiful ; for there was such an air of exclusiveness about her, you would have hesitated to speak of her as of any other woman.

She had just returned from the opera, where she had been introduced to a half-dozen handsome students, and reigned the lady paramount of the occasion.

She had exchanged her opera-dress of claret-colored velvet for a white silk dressing-gown ; but still her arms and hands, and her raven tresses, literally flashed with jewels, and a cross of diamonds, on her fair bosom, rose and fell with every breath.

Her forehead was high and calm ; her nose Grecian in its outline, with thin nostrils.

Her mouth was small, and, between her full lips, you caught glimpses of teeth like pearls. But, though you might notice all

this when you first saw her, it needed to be but a moment in her presence, ere you forgot all else, in the matchless glory of her eyes.

Such eyes!—no description could realize their beauty! Large and full as those of a gazelle, with wells of light in them like the sea; and yet dark and fearful as the tempest-clouds in a wild night.

They were not eyes that an artist could paint, or a poet sing; and yet they were human eyes, destined to influence, for good or evil, every soul on whom they rested.

There was unmistakable haughtiness in every turn of Aline Wentworth's small, graceful head; haughtiness in her arching neck, and even in the tiny, slippered foot which rested with such provoking firmness upon the velvet carpet. Her position in society, her whole course of education, had been exactly calculated to foster this proud self-reliance, and at fifteen (the time our story opens) Aline Wentworth was a girl no longer, but a high-spirited woman.

Among the students she had met at the opera, was one whose image she had borne with her into her palace-home—a man calm, handsome, and with a full sovereignty of pride, meeting and matching her own,—ERNEST GLENVILLE.

Was the name noble? It might be, and it might not; at all events, she should see him again to-morrow.

Her dark eyes grew fairly liquid with light as she murmured his name, and the flush burned on her damask cheek like the heart of the carnation.

Scarcely a stone's throw from the stately mansion of Judge Wentworth, in a more obscure part of the city, rose a tall, frowning, and, even then, somewhat dilapidated wooden mansion. In one of the most gloomy of its gloomy apartments a student sat, gazing forth into the night.

The moon-rays fell full upon his face, and you could observe him closely. His dark-brown hair curled in short ringlets about his calm, firm brow; his features were regular, and rather small, and in his clear blue eye lay slumbering a will which might have moved a world.

He had been called Ernest at his baptism, and his sponsors had chosen well; for, if ever there was a man on whose face power, and will, and firmness, were stamped legibly, that man was Ernest Glenville.

He was poor, but his great soul smiled and mocked at poverty. His only amusement was the opera, where the music swelled his heart with a new, exultant sense of strength.

To-night, for the first time, he had come home, bearing with him a new inspiration, a goddess even more beautiful than fame; to-night he had, for the first time, seen Aline Wentworth, and it was she of whom he sat dreaming.

At last, striking his head with his hand,

"Fool, that I am!" he exclaimed, "mad, insensate fool! What can Judge Wentworth's daughter be to me but a curse?" "And why a curse?" whispered his cooler judgment; "why think of her at all?"

"Sure enough, why?" he exclaimed once more. "I shall see her to-morrow, since she invited me with Irving and the rest, and then I will forget her. Ha, ha! fancy her dainty feet on

this bare floor! No, no! Ernest Glenville, there is work for you on earth; you may not pause to bask in fortune's smiles, or woman's eye."

So saying, he turned over a file of papers on the rickety table, drew towards him a large-sized book, bound in black leather, and commenced studying, as if for life.

In truth, it was a strange fancy to paint the Lady Aline Wentworth in the student's room. The uncarpeted floor was of rough pine boards, and the single stiff, high-backed chair, had neither arms nor rockers. The fire was kindled in a gloomy-looking little box-stove, and across the top of the one window cobwebs were woven, thick and strong, as if the growth of years. Here dwelt Ernest Glenville. Here dreams were nourished which the future was to gild with glory; and here, for the first time, the eyes of woman flooded his path with sunlight.

CHAPTER II.

"And she with her bright eye seemed to be
The star of the goodlie companie!"

There was a gorgeous festival at the mansion of Judge Wentworth.

The light fell pleasantly downward, from lamps of porcelain, held in the marble fingers of rare statues, over a scene of strange brilliancy. There were handsome men, and beautiful women; jewels, and robes of silken sheen.

But there were two who seemed to attract more attention than any others. The host's fair daughter, Aline, and, standing beside her, the handsome student, Ernest Glenville.

The proudly-beautiful woman stood in the alcove of a window, leaning gracefully against a statue of Juno, which might not inappropriately have been modelled after herself. In one hand she held her jewelled bouquet-holder, while with the other she was pulling in pieces a fragrant half-opened moss-rosebud.

The dark waves of her jetty hair were knotted with diamonds, and a single ruby burned upon her bosom, like a spark of fire. She was talking in a low, musical tone to Ernest Glenville, of passion, and poetry, and fame. Her wild eyes burned and sparkled till they kindled up his soul; and then, in turn, his voice grew eloquent with music, as he spoke of the past, dwelling always upon the triumph and success of men of low estate, — those great souls which have climbed upward, and made themselves mates for kings and nobles; and Aline Wentworth listened, until her proud heart did him homage, and for the first time in her life she loved.

Weeks passed on, and, reckless of the future, forgetful of the destiny his own hand was to carve, day after day Ernest Glenville sought the presence of the enchantress, and hushed his very soul to listen to the music of her voice, or drink in her beauty like an inspiration.

At last, one night he sought her in her luxurious boudoir, and told his love. He, who had never before breathed words of passion in woman's ear, grew strangely eloquent, and the light burned wilder than ever in Aline's glorious eyes. When he paused, she drew his hand to her lips, with more than woman's tenderness, and whispered those three words, so musical on the lips of the beloved, "I love you!"

For one instant Ernest Glenville caught her to his heart; and then, resolutely putting her from him, he said,

“My Aline!—no, not mine yet. I have a revelation to make, before I ask you to become my plighted bride. I am not wealthy, like your honored father, but poor, abjectly poor, as far as this world’s goods are concerned; I am rich in nothing but courage, and an unfaltering soul. I can feel my destiny stirring within me. I know I shall do something, yet, this great world will not blush to own. If you are mine, it is necessary you should have faith in me. We must wait, it may be years, before I could have a home to offer you. Think calmly; will you, Aline Wentworth, become the poor man’s promised bride? Remember what you say now is said forever, and do not answer rashly!”

Aline gazed for a second into his clear blue eyes, and then, turning from him, she paced the room, breathing rapidly, and wringing her hands. He had cautioned her against rashness; but every moment that she waited swept over him like an age of torture. There was a fierce struggle going on in the young girl’s soul, — love and pride contending for the mastery. Which shall conquer?

Glenville held his breath, and the sweat stood upon his brow in great beaded drops, until at last the cry of his heart burst forth, —

“Aline, Aline!”

The girl came and stood beside him. Tears were in her large black eyes, and trembled on her long, fringe-like lashes, as she raised her hand to his forehead, and brushed back the clustering

curls. She spoke at last, in answer to the mute appeal in his passionate glance.

“I cannot, O Ernest Glenville, I cannot! — I love you, God knows I do, — I who never loved mortal before; but to marry you, — O, Ernest, do not ask it!”

“It is well, Aline Wentworth; you have chosen;” and, so saying, Glenville turned away; but apparently a secret impulse urged him to return; for he came back, and, clasping her trembling form in his arms, he pressed on her lips one kiss, long and thrilling, and then, saying once more those solemn words, “You have chosen,” he left the house.

For a long time Aline Wentworth sat there still and quiet as he had left her. She saw nothing, heard nothing, but those three words of warning. They haunted her sleep for many a night after that. The struggle between love and pride had been terrible, and the conqueror dared not even triumph in his victory.

Three months after saw Ernest Glenville enlisted in the French army under Napoleon, at that time himself a subaltern.

Those were stirring times in the early days of the French republic, when fame and promotion hung upon the broad sword's gleam and the musket's flash, when ten days could raise the meanest name to glory. Stirring times, when Europe stood still, awe-struck, and men's hearts were failing them for fear. Here, in these wild days, and under an assumed name, Ernest Glenville struggled with the fierce energy despair so often brings to a noble soul. Aline knew not where he was; but hope whispered that for her sake he might win power and glory, and then return to her side.

She should have known him better. He had well said her

words must be forever; and, had he been the possessor of an earldom, ten days after their strange parting, he would not have shared it with Aline Wentworth.

He thought of her, indeed, not in scorn, not in anger; but, O, not with love, — at least, not with the love of passion; but calmly, and with a subdued, gentle sorrow, as we think of those long ago dead; and he only knew that he had been unhappy, by the desolation which left him nothing for which to hope!

CHAPTER III.

“And an eye shall vex thee, looking ancient kindness on thy pain!”

TENNYSON

“Yet, press on!

For it shall make you mighty among men;

And from the eyrie of your eagle thought

Ye shall look down on monarchs!” — WILLIS.

A period of six years passed. Other houses had grown up around the palace-home of Judge Wentworth. New York was gayer than ever, and Aline Wentworth more beautiful. It was an autumn afternoon. The country was glorious with the balmy air, the trees heavy with their ripe fruit, and the fields rich with waving grain. Something of this autumn glory had penetrated the heart of the city, and was flooding the gorgeous furniture in Aline Wentworth's boudoir.

Never had the Lady Aline been fairer. Her robe of many-shaded India silk became well the clear olive of her gypsy-like complexion. Her jetty hair seemed almost to emit sparks of light, and her glorious eyes out-flashed the diamonds on her brow.

A man, in the pride and prime of life, gallant and noble, was kneeling beside her. His mien betokened one rather used to command than to entreat; and yet there was a world of tenderness in the voice which pleaded for that proud woman's love! The lady rose at last, withdrawing her hand from his passionate clasp, and stood before him, with her proud eyes, and full, stately figure.

"I do not," she said, very calmly, "I do not estimate lightly the honor you have done me, General Howe. I am but the more sensible of it when I know that it is profitless. I have listened to your words, and they awoke no echo in my own heart. God knows I wish it were otherwise; but so it is, and I will not wrong your noble nature by giving you my hand without my heart. Leave me now, and God grant you may be happier than ever Aline Wentworth could have made you!"

For one moment he bowed his head over the fair hand that was extended to him, and then Aline Wentworth was alone!

Sinking down among the velvet cushions of her boudoir, she bent her head, and sobbed pitifully.

"O Ernest, Ernest!" she rather groaned than said, "have I not been faithful? Wealth, and rank, and power, have tempted me in vain. Every throb of my heart through all these weary years has been but thine. Wilt thou never come back?"

Ah, Aline! that fierce pride is working out its own terrible retribution.

It is a bitter cup, but thou shalt drink it to the dregs!

That same pleasant autumn day, in 1802, witnessed another wooing.

One there was, in Napoleon's army of fierce spirits, whom

men called "Bravest of the Brave." He had charged on many a battle-field, riding down men and spears like dust. His very name was a host in itself; and where foe met foe, if but his legion of invincibles hurled themselves into the fight, if but he thundered upon the enemy, Napoleon would sit down calmly and write, "The day is won!"

At first but an unknown soldier in the ranks, he had risen rapidly, until now a Marshal's baton had been the reward of his valor. And now there was peace, brief, indeed, but yet peace, though the couch where the tired nations lay still and rested was piled up on muskets.

In Paris rose many a stately palace, and in the grounds surrounding one of the fairest walked he whom men called the "Bravest of the Brave," with a young girl by his side. Scarce fifteen summers had deepened the rose-tint upon her cheeks, or woven their sunshine in her hair. Her brow was like the large white leaves of the water-lily, broad, and smooth, and fair. Her eyes were of that rich, violet blue, something the color of the lapis-lazuli, rarely seen but in the islands of the sea, and seldóm even there. Her figure was slight and fairy-like as a child's; and the trust and unsullied purity of girlhood shone in her clear eyes, as she turned them upon her companion.

"Sit down with me, Julie Augne," at length he said, in a tone of command better suited to camp than court, and yet with an inexpressible tenderness.

And then, with that fair young creature sitting by his side, the soldier told his love, while the shadow of her long lashes drooped over the cheek of Julie Augne. Her lips quivered, and her lithe little figure fluttered like a bird

“Julie,” he said, at length, “one learns but ill courtly phrase in the mad encounter, where men hold their breaths, and war-horses dash onward, with the bits between their teeth. And yet, Julie, one learns there to protect the loved, to guard them, ay, with one’s life; and so would I guard thee, sweet one. Will you trust me, my beautiful child?”

For one moment Julie Augne raised her clear, truthful eyes to his, and he could see that the lashes were heavy with tears, and then she spoke.

“But you, sir, how can you love me? Have you not loved another? I have heard men say that the secret of your bravery was because you had nothing more to lose,—because you had lost all, with a lost love. Where Julie Augne cannot have all, she scorns to share anything!” and the young girl turned away with a pride scarcely less imperious than that of Aline Wentworth herself. But her lover noticed it not, for he resumed,

“Listen to me, Julie, and you shall know everything. I am not what it has been my interest to appear, the son of poor French parents. I am an American, whose only heritage in his orphan boyhood was a noble name, and bitter poverty.

“I was a student. I hardly know how I became one, but alone and unaided I struggled upward.

“Years ago, when I was very young, I was introduced to one whom the world would have called far my superior,—one beautiful as the fairest dream of an opium-eater. I hardly know whether I ever loved her. I only know she dazzled and bewildered me, and my whole future seemed bounded by her smiles.

“My passion for her was sudden; it did not grow up, like my

love for you, from weeks of patient knowledge, while I read your pure heart like a book.

“It was a dream, — and like a dream it vanished. She refused to be mine, Julie, because I was poor and unknown; and yet I know she loved me. She is free still, but I have no wish to share with her my toil-won glory. She is to me as one dead; but you, Julie, my beautiful darling, will you not be my living love, my wife?”

Tears and smiles and blushes chased themselves over the young girl's sunny face, as she placed her hand in his, and returned to the house a plighted bride.

Brilliantly, as if for a festival, burned the tall wax tapers in the cathedral of Notre Dame. Clouds of incense floated out upon the air, and the organ melody from the lofty choir was faint and sweet as the far-off anthems of angels. Before the altar knelt Julie Augne. The first consul, Napoleon himself, gave away the bride, and Julie rose from that silent prayer a wife.

It boots not to write of festivals given in her honor, of the love that surrounded her with luxury; for in the palace, as in the cottage, the crown word and jewel of a woman's life is love. Without it fame and glory are but as apples of Sodom, and the sceptre mocks the hand that wields it.

But there was happiness in the palace-home of Julie Augne, for she was beloved!

CHAPTER IV.

“ Alas ! they had been friends in youth,
But whispering tongues can poison truth,
And constancy dwells in realms above,
And life is thorny, and youth is vain,
And to be wroth with one we love
Doth work like madness on the brain.”

COLERIDGE.

It was the winter of 1807 ; the power of Napoleon had reached its zenith. Paris was an universal festival. The shop-windows were gay with colored lights, and trade, which had been stagnant during the stormy days of the republic, was brisk and lively under the brilliant reign of the Emperor Napoleon.

In a hotel on one of the most fashionable streets, sat a beautiful woman, — remarkable among a thousand, even in that “ age of handsome women.”

She had been in Paris only five days, and already her staircase was crowded with liveried pages, bearing costly bouquets, and dainty, perfumed notes. Many a title had already in these brief five days been laid at her feet, and still Aline Wentworth (for she it was) walked majestically onward, with her great, dreamy eyes gazing far away, never seeming to recognize the bare existence of her titled train of suitors.

She sat in her boudoir, with the busy fingers of her maid Lucille rapidly employed in arranging her for the opera. Bouquets of the costliest exotics lay about the room all unheeded ; on some of them she had trampled, and they lay there crushed and fading, and yet swelling the air with fragrance.

Jewels lay upon the velvet carpet, jewels were strewn upon the damask lounge, and still others gleamed in their agate caskets, and bathed the room in a flood of light. Rich robes were scattered about on chairs and lounges, and on her inlaid table lay the costliest and most delicate gifts, tokens of the gay world's homage.

But, amid all this splendor, Aline Wentworth's thoughts were far away. What mattered it to her that already she was called the handsomest woman in Paris, that she was surrounded by more than the luxury of a princess, that the world was going mad about her beauty? What mattered it, when cheerfully she would have laid down all this luxury, and gone forth in peasant's cap and gown, but for one kiss from lips that she had known and loved long ago?

She heard but one tone, saw but one face, in the magic land of her fancy, — the face of Ernest Glenville, the tone in which he said "You have chosen!"

And yet not one word had she heard from him since that night on which they had so strangely parted. He had sailed for Europe under an assumed name, and she knew nothing of his departure from New York, or of his after-fate. It was a love, strong as her nature, which had then usurped the throne of her heart. Her pride was fierce and strong, — stronger than death; but this love had conquered even that, for she would have bowed her haughty head, and gone forth gladly to shame, or ruin, so it had been as the bride of Ernest Glenville.

Once, since her arrival in Paris, she had been presented at court, and the impression she produced there by her marvellous beauty was very singular. Napoleon himself had gazed on her

with a glance of admiration that brought the blushes to her clear, transparent cheek; and Josephine, almost the fairest woman of the time, had taken her hand, and pressed her lips to her brow with a sister's kindness.

There was one name which, ever since her arrival in Paris, had fallen on Aline's ear in accents of almost idolatrous admiration, — that of Marshal Michael Ney, the "Bravest of the Brave." She had heard it mentioned reverently by the people, affectionately by the emperor, and proudly by his brethren in arms, and already the very sound had a strange power over her fancy.

It seemed to carry her backward into fields of battle. She saw a clear blue eye, an unfaltering mien; and she saw this soldier fight as if some spirit had risen from the grave, armed to the teeth. Then she saw him, brave and grandly kind, like an angel of mercy, caring for the wounded, soothing the mourner, and anon, once more at the head of his division, in the fierce fight, for death or annihilation.

He had been away from Paris, and on this, the first night of his return, she had been told she would see him at the opera; and all day she looked forward to it with an almost feverish anxiety. But now even this hero of her dreams had faded from her mind, as she sat there in her Genoa velvet easy-chair, with the busy fingers of Lucille plaiting the jetty masses of her shining hair into waves.

The blushing, trembling spell of her girlhood's love was upon her heart to-night in all its power, and she dreamed on, till, unconsciously to herself, her parted lips murmured "Ernest," and the sound awoke her from her reverie.

“You have done well, Lucille,” she exclaimed, as she arose, and stood before the lofty mirror, extending from floor to ceiling. “You may knot a few diamonds in my hair; or, stay, I will wear simply this pearl rose-bud.”

O, what a beauty she was! How fair were the small hands which smoothed down the folds of her sable velvet! how delicately rounded the arms, whose exquisite contour seemed heightened by the drapery of illusion lace!

At last she was attired; the tiny gloves had been drawn over the slender fingers, a mantle of white cashmere had been folded about her regal figure, and she placed in her jewelled bouquet-holder one bouquet more elegant and costly than the rest, for it was the gift of Josephine herself.

Entering her carriage, in a few moments she was securely seated in her box at the opera, while whispers of “how beautiful! how beautiful!” were heard all around her.

It could not but have flattered any ordinary woman’s vanity thus to be the mark for every opera-glass in the most brilliant assemblage in Paris; but Aline Wentworth betrayed not the slightest satisfaction in glance or motion. Proud and queenly she sat there, as if she honored Paris by accepting the people’s homage.

“*Vive L’Empereur!*” shook the building to its centre, as Napoleon entered with his suite; and then there was a cry scarcely less loud, “Long live the Marshal! the ‘Bravest of the brave!’” and Marshal Michael Ney entered the Royal Theatre.

At the first glance, Aline Wentworth had uttered a faint cry and sank down breathless; but she had not been noticed in the tremendous excitement, and in five minutes she sat erect, strong

and cold, in the full glory of her matchless pride. Her eyes had recognized, beneath the Marshal's star and the cross of the Legion of Honor, a breast to which she had once been folded; those blue eyes had once gazed into her own, that voice had murmured her name; but she had chosen for herself, and this great, glorious man had gone forth from her side, to win a name she might not share; for this soldier, this Marshal Michael Ney, was but the poor student, Ernest Glenville, older grown.

Well had he said he felt his destiny stirring within him; he knew he should do something yet this world need not blush to own!

But he was hers no longer. A being was by his side whose loveliness could hardly grow dim even in the blaze of her own beauty.

Aline understood, by love's quick intuition, that it was the Marshal's wife, this fair child, — for even now she was little past the age of girlhood, — on whom he gazed so tenderly.

She was very sweet, with a slight form, and hair like an angel's wing, changing, and bright, and golden. Her eyes, — but they were like nothing on earth, — and scarcely were the stars of heaven, set floating in their sea of blue, as beautiful. Her dress was of pure white satin, and some bright roses lay trembling with her bosom's rise and fall.

What wonder that Aline Wentworth's heart grew sick and shuddering? But it was a glorious night; never were the lamps brighter, never were the dress-boxes a more intense blaze of gems and beauty, and never, never swelled music on the air with such high, exultant strains of melody.

Not once, in all this long evening, did Aline take her eyes

from the Marshal and his bride. Her own admirers watched in vain for a glance, until their patience was exhausted, and their lorgnettes turned in other directions; and still the lights blazed, still the music sounded, and still Ernest Glenville knew not that the eyes of his early love were resting upon his face. But at last it was all over; stately carriages rolled homeward, and Paris slept.

Released from the necessity of self-control, it was fearful to witness the paroxysms of Aline Wentworth's grief. She dismissed her maid, and paced hurriedly to and fro in her room. She tore her magnificent hair till it hung in dishevelled masses about her haughty form; she bit her lips till they were stained with blood; she snatched off her jewels, and flung them away; she stamped her delicate feet; she tore the drapery from her beautiful arms, and the folds of silk and linen from her passionate heart; she threw herself prostrate on the floor, with her black locks and torn garments streaming around her. Then she arose, and lifted up her clenched hand.

Splendid, yet terrible sight! One moment she seemed a fury, fearful in her grief; the next, she was touchingly beautiful, as anguish, and sorrow, and regret at this blighting of her first, strong love, agitated her.

Then the dark eyes were thrown upward in an intensity of agony, their long lashes trembling on the contracted brows; then her burning lips quivered, and her hand pressed her throbbing bosom, while the attitude of that superb form was eloquent of despair.

Half the night the excited woman gave herself up to this uncontrollable outbreak of her agony; then she sank into a

feverish slumber. After this, though her disappearance caused a nine days' wonder, Paris heard no more of Aline Wentworth.

CHAPTER V.

“ The bands are ranked — the chosen van
Of Tartar and of Mussulman,
The full of hope, misnamed forlorn,
Who hold the thought of death in scorn,
And win their way by falchion's force,
Or pave the path with many a corse,
O'er which the conquering brave must rise,
Their stepping-stone the last who dies.”

SIEGE OF CORINTH.

“ Ah, few shall part where many meet ;
The snow shall be their winding sheet,
And every turf beneath their feet
Shall be a soldier's sepulchre.”

CAMPBELL.

It was the morning of June 18th, 1815, eight years after the close of our last chapter. The star of Napoleon had set, meantime ; — he had spent at Elba a night turbulent with fearful dreams, and now it seemed to be once more ascending to its zenith ; once more the “ man of destiny ” was at the head of a French army, and the broad field of Waterloo resounded to the wild, triumphant cry, “ *Vive l'Empereur !* ”

O, what a grand mental panorama passes before our eyes, conjured, as by a spell, by that one word, Waterloo ! We seem once more to hear the shrieks which caused old men's hair to stiffen years afterwards in their dreams at night ; to live over those terrible moments when the enemy was hidden by fire and

smoke, and, seeing nothing, you could only track his presence by a dull, heavy, rumbling sound, the echo of his tread in the solid earth, jarring both men and horses; the silence, after a heavy charge of artillery, broken only by the groans of the dying.

And yet men call war glorious, and speak of battles as a splendid pastime. Ah! it may seem so, when the fight is raging, the horses prancing, the bugles sounding; but to die in battle,—to be left for hostile feet to spurn, hostile cavalry to trample, and the vulture to swoop upon at last!

It makes one's blood run cold to think of it. It is not the mere dying; many seek that, and the brave man fears it nowhere; but it is to die with no fond hand to brush back the heavy locks from the fevered brow, no gentle voice to murmur words of strength and love; to have no grave nor any to weep for us; no prayer, no farewell, nor any blessing! O, may God save all I love from a fate like this!

But the battle of Waterloo was a glorious battle, as battles go; and ever before our mind's eye, when its name is called, rises one figure, tall and stately. Connected as imperishably with this great battle as that of Napoleon himself, is the name of the "Bravest of the Brave."

How he looked, that morning! The white plumes on his helmet nodded with the heavy dew; his gorgeous uniform glittered in the light of the morning sun, and he himself, reining up his proud steed, seemed, with his Herculean stature and bold mien, as some warlike presence, that had risen out of the earth for the defence of his country's rights, and the green fields of his fathers.

The day was nearly ended when was made the last memorable

charge of the Old Guard, — such a charge as time never before witnessed. Ney had five horses shot beneath him, and then, chafing like a lion, fought on foot, at the head of his advancing legions. But now, for the first time in his life, he, the Invincible, was borne down by superior numbers. France and the empire were in his hands, and he struggled mightily to wrest them from the grasp of destiny ; but in vain. The “ Bravest of the Brave ” had fought his last battle !

In a lowly prison-cell we next find him. He had been condemned to be shot as a traitor, and was awaiting his doom with the calmness of a hero. A single lamp burned dimly in his cell, as he sat there alone, with his head bowed on his hands.

Suddenly a key turned in the rusty lock, the door swung open on its hinges, and Julie stood before him, with her three fair children. He was so intensely absorbed in thought, that he did not even look up until he felt his wife's arms about his neck, her tears warm upon his face.

“ Julie ! ” he exclaimed ; “ Heaven be thanked for so much mercy ! I die to-morrow at ten, and I had not thought to see you here.”

“ Die ! No, dearest, I am come to tell you you shall not die I will go to the king to-morrow, and pray him, on my bended knees, to spare your life. We will go anywhere, — into any island or desert, so he but leave that ; and he will not, he dare not, refuse it to your wife ! ”

Ney turned his large blue eyes on her with a mournful smile,

for he knew the Bourbons ; but he would not deprive her of this last, faint hope ; so he said, quietly,

“ Well, Julie, call my children to me ; it will do no harm to bid them farewell, and I can unsay it when you shall have won me my life to-morrow.” Then, turning to his children, he added, solemnly, “ Ernest, Julie, Michael, your father blesses you ! Be good children ; be faithful to God, to your mother and to France. Your father has loved France, — do you love her ; never remember how I died, but love your country, and do not disgrace my memory. You, Ernest and Michael, be good to your mother and sister, — so only will the good God prosper you.”

Then he clasped them each separately in his arms, and blessed them ; and, turning to his wife, he gave her many words of earnest and tender counsel. In the midst of his discourse, the turnkey came to the door, and the hour for their interview was ended.

“ God bless you, Julie ! ” whispered the hero, amid his choking sobs ; “ bear it like a soldier’s wife, my poor child, and teach our children to love their father’s memory.”

Already had the jailer led the children from the apartment, and now, with his key in his hand, he stood impatiently waiting for the mother.

“ Go, Julie, — go, darling ! ” whispered the Marshal, as he strained her to his heart in a last embrace. At length she glided from his arms ; but she turned, ere she reached the door, and whispered,

“ Do not fear, dearest ; I shall see the king, and you will be free to-morrow.”

“ Yes, free ! ” cried the hero, as the door rolled together on

its hinges, and shut out Julie from his sight forever ; “yes, free ; and I, too, shall see the King to-morrow ; but it will be Him before whom the power of the Bourbons is as dust !” And then a sense of utter, overpowering desolation came upon him, and he sank back on his pallet, more exhausted by this last interview with his wife and children than he had been by five hundred battles.

At five minutes before ten the next morning, the rosy glow of the sunshine flooded the king’s drawing-room, and fell upon the pale, deathly face of a woman crouching at his feet, with three small children clinging to her robe.

O, how the rich glow of the sunlight mocked her as she knelt there, in her anguish, pleading for life, but for life ! O, how she cursed, in her aching heart, the cold, freezing French politeness, that could keep her there in her sorrow and answer nothing !

Ah ! there is a cup of trouble for thee to drain, Julie, — sharp, bitter trouble ; but rest will come after it, — sunny days, when the past will be but a half-forgotten memory of sorrow ; when thou shalt be again a bride, when other lips than his shall press on thine their homage to thy beauty, — and what of him ?

A proud, stern man stood alone among his foes. Long, glittering lines of soldiery were drawn up on either side of him, muskets were flashing in the sunlight, and in the distance rolled the surging tide of human beings hungry for death.

Noble, free, unshackled, he stood there, and spoke, with

his hand upon his manly heart, those few, bold words, which shall be remembered as long as tales are read, or gallant deeds are told :

“ I declare, before God and man, that I have never betrayed my country ;— may my death render her happy ! *Vive la France !* ”

Then, gazing around over the assembled throng, his eye fell on a carriage, drawn up at a little distance, where, in mourning robes, with her long veil thrown back, sat Aline Wentworth. It was the first time he had gazed on that face, with its strangely-glorious eyes, since their last parting at New York.

Who shall say whether it seemed to him a ministering angel, or an avenging spirit ? Who shall say how much of the old love awoke in the hero's heart, in that long, thrilling gaze ? He said nothing— nothing save that one word, “ her,” hissed through his clenched teeth. Then, turning to the soldiers, he calmly bared his noble breast, and cried, “ My comrades, fire on me ! ”

Words worthy a hero, — whose reply was the flash of muskets, and that brave heart was still !

At that moment, a shriek, a woman's shriek, wild, terrible, unearthly, swelled upon the air, and Aline Wentworth's proud soul passed before its Judge !

Who shall say whether his spirit called not to hers, as it winged its flight toward heaven ? Who shall say that they, in this life so strangely parted, met not above ? Her woman's heart, strong in its anguish, strong in its hopeless love, could beat no longer when its idol ceased to live.

His wife could live on, his children could look calmly upon the murderers of their father, his comrades who had stood by his side in so many battles could aim coolly at his heart; but Aline Wentworth, the strong-minded, proud, high-souled American woman, lived but in his life, and was faithful to the "Bravest of the Brave" in death.

NOTE. — Recent discoveries have induced a belief that Marshal Ney was, in reality, an American, though it suited his designs to appear of French parentage. In thus grouping together a few scenes from his private life, I have but performed a labor of love; and I offer its result as a humble tribute to a great man's memory.

BESSIE GREEN.

“O, WHAT a terrible thing it is to have everybody hate me !”

The words were childish, and the speaker was little past her tenth year. She was a strange-looking object, as she sat, in the dim twilight, at the window of an old-fashioned farm-house.

It was Thanksgiving day, and the good people of Ryefield were making merry, far and wide.

There were bright fires upon the spacious hearths, and spruce-boughs and branches of asparagus waved over the red-framed looking-glasses, and above the windows hung twigs of holly, with their bright red berries.

But nowhere wore the spruce-boughs a brighter green, or the holly-berries a deeper red, than in the old farm-house of Grandfather Morgan, as he was called, for thrice five miles around.

In the old-fashioned parlor there were groups of happy children : young men and maidens, just arrived at the awkward stage of blushes, and supererogatory hands ; meek-eyed mothers, and bold, sturdy-looking farmers, in home-made trousers and cow-hide boots.

On either side of the hearth-stone sat old Grandfather Morgan and his wife, and between them the fire danced and sparkled, and

the bright flames wound themselves round the ruddy back-log, in a thousand caressing folds.

But one there was to whose eye there came no light, to whose cheek there came no flush; for there was no mother's hand to brush back the heavy tresses from her brow, no mother's lips to murmur blessings over her, or rest softly on her upturned cheek.

So there, in the lonely kitchen, with her young face pressed closely against the narrow window-pane, sat little Bessie Green, sometimes sighing fitfully, as sounds of mirth and childish laughter floated to her ears, through the half-closed doors of the other room.

She was by no means a pretty child. Her brow was not particularly smooth, soft or low; nor was her hair in the least similar to braided sunshine. Her eyes were not blue as the Indian seas; nor yet did her fair cheek flush like the heart of a summer rose, beneath the shadow of long, golden lashes.

There was no charm in her elfin features to win your heart; and yet, if you believed in goblins and fairies, you would look twice at the almost unearthly face, peering from beneath the tangled masses of her black hair. The hair itself might have been made passable by good management; as it was, her face had no recommendation, save that her wild black eyes were lit by a kind of bold fearlessness, which all the contumely incidental to her situation had not been able to subdue.

And yet it seemed a strange thing that one so young, so innocent, should be so utterly alone. Strange that even Grandfather Morgan's kind eyes grew stern as he looked on her, and young faces darkened as she joined their circle.

Stranger still, when you knew that Grandmother Morgan had borne the poor child's mother beneath her heart.

Amy Morgan had been called the fairest flower of Ryefield, from the time she first opened her blue eyes to the light of a midsummer morning. Fifteen summers had she roamed through moor and meadow-land; fifteen winters had she sat by her father's side, in the fire-shine at the farm-house, or the high-backed pew at church, on a Sabbath day.

She was the very impersonation of the spirit of gladness; and yet, low down in her soul, was a spring of unquiet waters, of whose existence she had never dreamed, in the sunshine of her innocent young heart.

Flowers — fresh, warm heart-flowers — were springing there, which no hand had gathered; and the wild tide of passion lay hushed and still, like some sunny lake, which has never mirrored the face of mortal.

But, like the charmed existence of the sleeping-beauty, this heart-sleep was destined to have an end, when there should appear some cavalier daring enough to break through the hedge of thorns, and kiss into the warmth and life of passion the untold dreams and fancies walking through the shadowy aisles of her heart, like nuns through the aisles of a convent.

One day she had been out to gather flowers, when she met a stranger in the forest. You could scarcely have imagined a fairer picture than was Amy. On the green grass beside her lay her simple straw hat, tied round with a blue ribbon. Her lap was full of wild-flowers, and she was telling, school-girl like, impossible fortunes with the leaves of a forget-me-not, when her reveries were interrupted by a rich, musical voice. Looking up,

she encountered the bold black eyes of the handsome stranger. He addressed her in a strain of playful gallantry, as new as it was pleasing. Fairy, and sprite, and princess, were among the high-sounding titles with which he dignified her, until at last she faltered, between her blushes,

“O no, sir, you are mistaken; I am only Amy Morgan, daughter of the farmer who lives in yonder brown cottage.”

“And I, sweet maiden,—I am only Clarence Green, passed-midshipman in the United States service; so let us sit down upon this bank, and get acquainted, since we’ve met here, on the very hunting-grounds of the fairies.”

If Amy had been startled at first, his respectful manner, and the open glance of his black eyes, were sufficient to reassure her; and she sat by his side, on the green bank, without withdrawing the trembling hand he had prisoned in his own.

And there, for many a summer day, they met, till love, deep and all-absorbing, took possession of sweet Amy Morgan, till, at her lover’s bidding, she would have laid down even life itself. O, bitter, in this deceitful world, is almost always the recompense of a love like this!

Grandfather Morgan frowned when he saw the handsome stranger wandering by Amy’s side over the fields, and lifting her slight form over the swollen brooks; but Amy was his darling, and the expression of his dislike was suppressed.

“Next month, Amy, when the fruit gets heavy and falls down, and the ripe peaches blush in the autumn sunshine, you shall be my bride,” whispered Clarence Green, as he sat by Amy’s side.

And then, with whispered words of endearment and supplica-

tion, he won her, who already loved and trusted, to give him all that woman can give, and more than she can give without dashing every drop of joy from the chalice of her life.

Clarence Green had no time to prove whether the love he had professed was true, whether he would have called Amy wife ere the waning of the autumn moon; for, in less than one short week, he was thrown from the back of his horse, upon a pile of sharp stones, and killed.

Amy uttered few words of lamentation, but the rose faded from her cheek, and her face grew thinner and more spiritual. Months had passed; and, one night, toward the close of February, she stole, with her noiseless footfall, into the old kitchen, and, kneeling at the feet of her stern father, sobbed out, in broken words, the story of her shame.

For a moment Grandfather Morgan sat silent; then his voice broke forth, not in words of pity or mercy, but in half-stifled curses on the destroyer of his child.

Tears of bitter agony coursed over Amy Morgan's pale cheeks, and, clasping her hands, she pleaded, "O, father, dear father, do not curse the dead! Let your anger fall on me, for I deserve it, but not on Clarence! If he had lived, I should have been his wife; and now, even now, would I lay down this guilty, miserable life, to call him back but for one short hour! O, father, do not curse him, or I shall die here on the stone hearth at your feet!"

But the tide of wrath burned fiercely in the father's heart, and, even as she knelt there, with her hands clasped and the tears streaming over her cheeks, with one blow of his arm he

felled her to the earth, and the blood gushed from her parted lips, in a warm red stream, over her white garments.

The repentant father caught her to his heart, and bore her to her own little room; but when he called on her to forgive him, to look on him once more, she only muttered incoherent ravings of agony.

That night, amid the storm and tempest and the fierce howl of angry winds, Bessie Green was born. Fit welcome for a child of shame! Not even her mother's voice could arouse poor Amy from the stupor into which she seemed to have fallen. Only once she spoke coherently. It was when they put her baby in her arms.

"It has its father's eyes," she murmured, as she strained it convulsively to her breast. "The world is cold for thee, my motherless one! I've nothing to give thee but a name; let them call thee Bessie Green!"

And then, still holding her child, she closed her eyes, as if in prayer; her breath grew shorter and shorter, and her soul passed forth upon the wing of the tempest, to the throne of Him who said to one of old time, "Go, daughter; sin no more!"

Bitter was the repentance of Farmer Morgan over the grave of his dead child; strange that it softened not his heart toward the living.

But no; the little Bessie looked on them with her father's eyes, and scarcely the mother's blood which flowed in her veins kept her from being the object of hatred, as she surely was of dislike. When Grandmother Morgan looked at her, the sweet face of her Amy, with its golden curls, seemed to arise in con-

trast to the pale, still child, with her elf-locks and gypsy-like eyes.

Bessie never played like other children. Sometimes she would watch the wind-driven clouds, sometimes hold a feather up to be swayed by the breeze, sometimes read by the firelight strange tales of ghosts and goblins, that no one knew how she had contrived to pick up. But her dearest pleasure was to steal out to her mother's grave, where a white cross had been raised, bearing no inscription but that sweet name, AMY, and weep there with her lips pressed to the cold marble, calling on the dead by every endearing title that she could recall.

She had grown up entirely unaccustomed to be loved or petted; and yet she felt her loneliness keenly, this gay Thanksgiving night, with so many young and happy hearts around her.

For a long time she sat in the dimly-lighted kitchen, with her face pressed to the window; and then, starting up, she stole away into her own little room, up stairs. The moon had risen now, and by its light she took from her pine bureau a gold locket, containing the blended hair of both her parents, and fastened it around her neck.

Then, wrapping herself in her shawl, she stole out into the keen, frosty air of the winter evening. The snow had fallen heavily the night before, and it lay now upon the ground, sometimes in drifts, sometimes in broad, white sheets.

But onward sped the poor, lonely child, over bank and hollow, until at last she reached the village church-yard, and knelt beside her mother's grave, with her lips pressed against the cold headstone.

For a half-hour she continued kneeling there, sobbing out her

love and grief; and then, at last, she started and hurried away, but in a direction opposite to her grandfather's farm-house. The one purpose was strong in her mind, to escape from such coldness and misery.

The next morning Bessie Green was missed from the old home-stead. A few inquiries were made for her; but the search was neither active nor long sustained, and in a few days her fate had nearly ceased to be an object of wonder or anxiety.

Ten years had passed; and one afternoon, late in the winter, the village sewing-society had assembled at Grandfather Morgan's.

The usual topics of village interest had been discussed. It had been "allowed" that "Anna Ellis' new silk dress was the most extravagantest thing ever seen in those parts;" and that it was "a burnin' shame for that Anna Ellis to have sich a dress, when everybody in Ryefield knew her father was only a poor blacksmith, and she herself put on the airs of a city young lady."

Then it had been decided that Charlotte Lincoln had turned off 'Squire Knight's son, because he was seen coming out of the tavern on a Sunday night.

The gossip of the village having been consummated, a lady present, who had been visiting in New-York, remarked that she had there heard the distinguished vocalist Clara Fisher, and engrossed the rest of the afternoon in a description of melodies which, according to her account, were but little inferior to those in the Swedish legend, where Father Alfus passes a century,

thinking it but a day, as he listens to the song of the bird of Paradise.

Great, therefore, was the surprise of the good people of Ryefield, when, at their next sewing-society, it was announced, by the same indisputable authority, that the illustrious vocalist, at whose concerts, it was confidently reported, a hundred dollars had been paid for a single seat, was coming to give a free concert, her last for the season, in the old Presbyterian church, in their own humble village.

Time passed on, and the report was confirmed by the arrival of an orchestra, and the putting up of some printed handbills.

Everything having been made ready, the lady herself came also. Dressed in black and closely veiled, she was handed by her servant from her travelling-carriage, and up the steps of the only hotel of which the village could boast.

Her meals were served in her own room, by her own servants; and though everybody was at the church a half-hour before the appointed time, yet the singer was not seen, until, at seven o'clock precisely, she stepped from behind the curtain, and walked forth upon the stage; how and when she came there being, to this day, a mystery to the good people of Ryefield.

She was habited in a close-fitting robe of black velvet, cut low in the neck. Her shoulders seemed fair as statuary, as they shone through the scarf of illusion lace which enveloped her figure like a mantle of dew-drops. Her hair was looped back in heavy braids, and in its folds nestled a single japonica. Her features were regular, but you could scarcely tell what was their contour; for, in looking at her, one noticed nothing but those dark eyes — eyes which, having been once seen, would haunt your

dreams for many a night, and could never again be forgotten. But when her voice burst upon the air, in a strain of low, thrilling sweetness, earth itself was forgotten in a dream of heaven!

She had chosen, for the most part, simple, touching ballads, such as "Auld Robin Gray," and Dunn English's song of "Ben Bolt;" but when at last she concluded the entertainment with "Allan Percy," faintly warbled, she received from the audience, not enthusiastic cheers; not, as in her southern concerts, bouquets of exotics knotted round with diamonds; but the richer tribute of tears, and sighs, and stifled sobs.

Meekly she bowed her graceful head, with the tear-drops resting on her lashes, and passed behind the curtain. Slowly, half sadly, the people rose, as if under the spell of an enchantress; and thus ended Clara Fisher's concert at Ryefield.

The next day, the orchestra and the instruments and the travelling-carriage disappeared, and it was supposed the veiled lady had accompanied them.

That evening Grandfather and Grandmother Morgan sat alone before their brightly-blazing fire, their chairs drawn close together. They had been talking of the previous evening's entertainment, and Grandmother Morgan said it seemed to her as if the angels in heaven were singing in chorus.

"Wife," whispered the old man, as he pushed his chair a little nearer hers, "did the singer's voice remind you of any you ever heard before?" and he bent his lips close to her ear.

"Amy," gasped the old woman, from between her closed teeth.

It was the first time that word had been spoken between them for years, and it seemed like the opening of a coffin.

"Yes, Amy," answered the old man; "her voice seemed strangely like that of our poor dead girl."

Then, for a time, there was silence between them. At last the old woman said,

"Husband!"

"Well, wife?"

"I have been thinking, mayhap, we did n't treat that poor child Bessie as well as we ought. She, poor thing, was not to blame for her father's misdeeds, and we ought to have been all the kinder to her because she was lonesome-like. I wish I could know where she is, before I die."

"Wife," answered the old man, "it's just twenty years to-night, since Amy died. We shall sleep beside her long before twenty more years have passed."

At this moment there was a light tap on the outer door, and the singer, Clara Fisher, stood before them. Drawing a chair to the fire, she said, in a singularly musical tone, while her face was turned from the light, "You had a grandchild once, named Bessie Green. May I tell you of her, or do you hate her name even now?"

"O, tell us, tell us!" cried both at once, with trembling eagerness; and Grandfather Morgan added, "We have been unjust to the poor child; God grant we may have her forgiveness before we die!"

The singer's voice was husky when she commenced to speak; but it soon grew clear and strong.

"Thanksgiving night," she said, "Thanksgiving night, a little

more than ten years ago, this poor child, Bessie Green, sat weeping by your kitchen window. There was light and life around her; but no one seemed to remember her existence, and she was very desolate. At last she went forth into the cold night air, with but one purpose in her childish heart, to steal away from the mirth and joy around her. She wandered on, on, until at last, when it seemed as if her trembling limbs could bear her weight no longer, she met a kind physician returning homeward from a midnight ride. The moon shone down upon her, full and clear, and the good man stopped his horse, at the sight of the little figure tottering through the drifting snow.

“ ‘Where are you going, my little one?’ he asked, kindly. — ‘Anywhere, sir,’ was the reply. ‘I don’t know where, myself.’ — ‘Are you not very tired?’ — ‘Yes, sir, very.’ — ‘Would you like to ride home with me?’ — ‘O, thank you, yes, sir!’ and the strong, kind arms lifted her upon the horse, and, clasping the stranger’s neck, she fell fast asleep as she rode away.

“He would have brought the child back to you; but she prayed so earnestly to remain, that he ceased his persuasions, and whispered to his meek-eyed wife, as he looked on his own six hungry boys, ‘God will provide for them, dear love!’

“In the early spring there came to the little cottage an old college friend of the doctor’s. The stranger was a celebrated musician, and, one day, hearing Bessie singing to herself, he said that, as surely as the great Father had given to every one of his creatures a proper vocation, music was hers; and he offered to take her with him, and have her instructed.

“Dr. Maitland called her to his side. ‘Hard as ’t will be to part with you, my Bessie,’ he said, ‘I think it best that you

should go. But we will never *send* our little girl away ; do as you please.'

"For a while the poor child hesitated ; she was loved at Maitland cottage, and to her love brought a strange blessedness ; but her child-heart comprehended that it was best to go, and, timidly raising her dark eyes, she placed her hand in that of Ernest Fisher.

"He gave her a thorough musical education ; and when he died bequeathed to her his name and his renown, all he had to bestow. She went before the public, with the one purpose warm in her heart, of winning wealth and fame, that you might love her ; for I, dear parents," — and she sank on her knees before them, — "I am Bessie Green ! In every triumph, my heart has longed for love, the pure, sweet love of kindred. I have wealth and fame now ; all, all are yours, — only bless me once, and call me your dear child before I die !"

But the voices were choked with tears that would have murmured blessings on her, and the hands trembled that were laid upon her bowed head. At last, they sank upon their knees beside their beautiful child, and together, in the silence, they prayed — the reunited !

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